



Democracy and Nonviolence  
A Study of their Relationship

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DELHI CITIZENS' PEACE COMMITTEE

*Sponsored by*

GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION

221/223 Rouse Avenue

NEW DELHI

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Price : Rs. 20.00 in India

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*Published and Printed by Shri Krishna Kumar, Gandhi Peace Foundation,  
221/223, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi and printed at the I. M. H. Press  
Private Limited, Chandni Chowk, Delhi-6.*

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asks the question "is democracy compatible with violence?"

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## FOREWORD

I am very pleased that a large number of eminent writers and thinkers have in their contributions to this volume shown beyond doubt that there is an intimate and inherent relationship between Democracy and Non-violence. I welcome this publication at this time in the history of our Republic because there is a chance that democracy may be imperilled in our country by the thoughtless use of violence by the people for purposes of righting wrongs, real or imaginary. It has become necessary to put the challenge squarely to ourselves that we cannot be true democrats without basic allegiance to non-violent methods of individual or group action. We must specially inculcate in our young people that to be a democrat one has to be non-violent. It is ironical that we have to make afresh this elucidation in our country where Gandhiji lived and worked for half a century. But irony or not, we must take up once again, with all the dedication and truthfulness we are capable of, the cause of non-violence for the good health of our Democracy and also for helping mankind to march from darkness to light and from decadence to a re-birth.

I commend this volume of the Gandhi Peace Foundation to all those who love and cherish the democratic way of life.

Dr. Zakir Husain

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New Delhi*



## *P R E F A C E*

The question of the relationship between democracy and non-violence no longer remains merely an academic exercise for the political scientist or the non-violent theoretician. It has acquired practical relevance in the context of recent happenings in some democratic countries of the world. A wave of mass violence and strife seems to sweep over nations like the U.S.A., France, Germany, Japan and Indonesia, striking at the very foundations of their democratic structure and values. There are unmistakable signs on the political horizon that the cult of violence is gradually gaining strength and claiming new adherents even within democratic societies.

The conditions are no better in this country. We have been witnessing the phenomenon of violent and coercive mass agitations in the different arenas of our national life. Bundhs, gheraos, unlawful lightning strikes, etc., have been vitiating our economic life. The Rule of Law often becomes the casualty of the irresponsible behaviour of political groups. On the slightest pretext, they take recourse to direct action, resulting in lawlessness and disorder. The Gandhian concept of satyagraha has been debased and degraded in the hands of unscrupulous politicians. It is being employed to coerce the government and political opponents, and not to reconstruct our society or to resist violence and exploitation in our body politic.

This volume is an attempt to study the concrete relationship between democracy and non-violence in the context of these harsh and often frightening realities of the present situation. Our object is not to plunge into fine philosophical

disquisitions or to spin out utopias. Nor is it to preach sermons or repeat the old cliches. The learned contributors have sought to discuss this subject in an objective manner with an eye on reality. They have approached the issue from different perspectives. Yet all of them reach the inescapable conclusion that the future of democracy and non-violence alike are linked together; one has no future without the other. Both strengthen each other on their onward march to human progress and growth.

I am very grateful to the learned contributors for responding to our invitation at very short notice. I have no words to express my respectful gratitude to Dr. Zakir Husain for his inspiring 'Foreword'. His life and work have always been a source of inspiration and strength to all of us in the Gandhi Peace Foundation. I dare not express my deep gratitude to Shri G. Ramachandran, but for whose interest and guidance, this book would not have seen the light of the day. Lastly, but not the least, I am thankful to all my colleagues for their help and assistance at every step, and to Shri Janardana Menon for going through the proofs.

15 August 1968

**Krishna Kumar**

## Dr. M. V. Krishna Rao

*explains the postulates of democracy and discusses Gaudhi's contribution to the development of the democratic theory.*

Whitehead once said that "the unstable Ages are the great Ages". There may be no doubt that the present Age is one of the great Ages of the world, and we who now live have experienced disasters more serious than those of preceding generations, and likewise have received, as compensation, opportunities that do not frequently recur. We have arrived at a time when the masses of mankind definitely and undoubtedly matter. The consensus of mankind has at length realized the truth of what the Encyclopaedists declared that mankind was composed not of some men, but of all men. The government of all men is democracy, and its history has shown that short-cuts are not the best roads to travel by, that there is little gain in sharp upheavals, that character



and worth of mankind secure greater and more natural advantages than any other and that natural tendencies favour evolution and oppose, most sharply, revolution.

Lincoln's phrase that 'democracy is government of the people, for the people and by the people' is good rhetoric. But a system of government cannot be built on a foundation of propositions. The difficulties of democracy are many. Still, the supreme issue today is whether this democratic country is to be only another parenthesis in history of governments, or whether it will prove to be an infant passing through one of the maladies of childhood and which, by developing resistance to the germs of disease, will be stronger and healthier in maturity. Its operative ideal is political equality, which is respect for human life. This respect has a religious origin, in that it does not pertain to the activating force of an animate biped, but to the quintessence of individual freedom. Besides, it involves personal responsibility and not privilege; it involves mass education, which is not mass-producing pedagogy but the very antithesis of it. It is not indoctrination but intellectual freedom to strengthen the sense of moral responsibility; it involves representative government; majority principle, the rule of law, freedom of discussion and the liberty of the individual.

The condition of good government which transcends all others is the qualities of human beings. The end of man, which is prescribed by the eternal or immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development of powers to a complete and consistent whole. True self-development is progression not to mere power or strength but to the good and the right. Good life cannot be good without being full, and democratic diversity is one aspect of full life.

Democratic method can flourish only in a society where the reasoning power and moral responsibility of the individual for the initiative and active and intelligent participation in the affairs of the State are respected. Democracy is an effort to found society on ethics, a society in which reason governs the conduct of men and in which man feels responsibility for his action and contributes some thought and feeling to the common life. It is thus constant striving to make life good to live and to achieve a social scheme in which everyone is assured his due. Democracy is faith in man in his ultimate perfectability. No man gives only the force of his arm as in a monarchy or aristocracy, but each is regarded as capable of adding something unique out of his own personality. It is a society not of similar personnel but of equals, in the sense that each is an integral and irreplaceable part of the whole.

Liberty is the watch-word of democracy and justice is its guide. Then, what is required as a foundation of democracy is not merely a high level of intelligence, sound common sense and sound system of education, but also a clear consciousness of community, the existence of an explicit public opinion, a sensitive social conscience and an effective general will which are the characteristics of corporate personality and the necessary conditions of successful democratic government.

Democracy involves a new social ethics which springs from moral life based on our common experiences engendered by fellow-feeling and the liberation of a greater diversity of personal capacities. Democracy is an enduring social system within which education is going on. It is neither a totalitarianism nor an anarchy. It is an experiment in human life, a striving after moral and spiritual life. The moral dimension is supreme in a democracy which is the only

social order that is admissible, because it is the only one consistent with justice. Accordingly, democracy is non-violent, and non-violent resistance to evil demands a stronger self-control, a more enduring solidarity of purpose, a greater capacity for passive suffering, a higher ethical development than most human beings have thus far attained.

Thus, one defends democracy not as a perfect system, but as one which is more likely than any other to avoid certain gross evils. There is less likelihood under democracy of vast abominations. Plutocrats are as incompetent and as bad as dictators, and democracy may have its hesitations and its slowness in coming to necessary decisions. Bertrand Russell says: 'it may be that democracies have the faults of Hamlet, but autocracies have the faults of Othello which have even worse consequences than those of Hamlet'.

To substitute law for force, wherever possible, and to have a system of a government so generally approved that force is seldom needed to secure obedience is essential to the very existence of civilized society and survival of human personality. Democracy is felt to be just, and it provides a legal method of securing a change of government whereas in other forms of government change can only be brought about by revolution. Democracy has this supreme merit and it is the only form of government consistent with human culture and civilization.

The democratic way of life is essentially a continuous search after equilibrium, compromise and balance between two contending opposites. Thus, democracy is a more comprehensive expression of modern civilization than any other form of government for, it demands much co-operation from its members, and it also involves a perpetual and unremitting struggle of the rational against the irrational. It has shown itself capable of changing without perishing in the process

of change, and it has the additional advantage of not being the hasty product of a generation but of belonging to a long and impressive tradition of thought.

Democracy consists of an attitude which comprises three things:

- (i) the acknowledgment of the manhood of each and every human individual;
- (ii) a respect for the generic essence of manhood comprising faculties of reason and conscience which are the incorruptible legislators of the soul; and
- (iii) an all-compassing and compassionate love of individual men as seekers after truth.

The end of true democracy is perfected individualism, not in selfishness but in service, not in isolation but in fraternity. Democracy so conceived is consistent with morality and develops its fuller social implications that are founded on disinterested acknowledgment of all human claims.

Democracy is a theory of society based on dharma, and its conception of the nature of government follows from the conception of the place of government in society. Fortitude, reticence, restraint, purity, self-control, culture, truthfulness and uprightness, active cultivation of friendliness to all living beings characterize dharmic society, according to the Hindu; "*Satyam Damah Tapah Saucham Santosho Hir Kshama Arjavam Jnanam Samo Daya Dhyanam Eva Dharma Sanatanah*"—(Santiparva). It is by pursuit of these qualities that man attains the true autonomy or *swarajya*. According to the Greek and the Hindu, to be happy is to be free and to be free is to be high-souled. The man to whom these qualities apply is the man of magnanimous instincts (*udara charita*) with a sense of dignity of himself and others, free from petty dispositions and ingenious resentments that degrade man.

The aim of democracy is to bring into human character more of that unity, consistency, harmony, proportion, upon which the Greek philosophers were never weary of insisting as the essence of virtue. Democracy counsels temperance, the just and proportionate use of every faculty and gift, and not the abolition or abandonment of any. Temperance is described as that sovereign self-mastery, that perfect self-control, in which the mysterious will of man holds in harmonious subjection all the passions and faculties of his nature. Democracy is the playground of the struggle of the opposites. Democracy is thus a process of self-effort by which the dust in man is rejected or subdued by the angel in man so as to attain a higher synthesis. But this synthesis is never complete and the absolute or perfection is never attained, for even the highest integration conceived by man is still a relation and not an absolute. Thus, Buddha said that man is the fabricator of his own salvation and not even God can help those who cannot help themselves. By man right is done, by man right is undone; by man evil is done, by man evil is undone. Self-discipline (*sadhana*) is the path of immortality and sloth (*alasya*) the path of death.

Democracy must seek to accomplish human happiness by the development of character. Gandhism does not teach with Proudhon that property is theft, nor with Tolstoy that accumulation of property is sinful. Industrial production for use should take the place of production for profit. The fault does not lie either in the scheme of production or distribution but in the motivation of men. Gandhi says: "I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of the millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour but greed".

Gandhi recognizes that inequalities in wealth are a part of

the divine order. All men cannot claim to have equal possessions. Each man must use his ability to increase his wealth with the idea of using it for the service of society and humanity in ways for which each one is specially fitted by birth, heredity, nature, temperament and training. Instead of class privileges and vested interests, there is insistence in Gandhi's teaching on the fundamental right and duty of each human being to do the fullest justice to all in the interests of society and order.

The aim of human life is not acquisition of material advantages through strength and conflict, but through control of the lower nature which craves for a maximum share of the earth's possessions, to liberate the higher energies in the interests of spiritual development. A legitimate curb on man's material ambitions and the release of human energy in order to extend the field of spiritual pleasure and spiritual evolution are demanded. It is not wealth which Gandhi condemns but the accumulation and the hoarding of wealth, the ostentation, the inhumanity which are the vices to which wealth tempts. The emphasis is not on the ability to create wealth, but the ability to use it for common welfare. Human progress has revealed that manhood is much larger now than it ever was before; many signs of human depravity, as the history of one hundred years shows, have come to be eliminated: child labour controlled, larger wages determined, and inhumanity in labour conditions wiped out. Manhood now demands more relief from toil and more opportunity for the development of the higher life which is its calling. According to Gandhi this higher life is the service of humanity and of God. Every activity devoted to the realization of the economic, social and political wellbeing is only a method of self-realization, for there is the spirit of consecration behind every activity. Political activity, too, like others, is thus spiritualized. Gandhi says: "for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They

subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap, because they kill the soul”.

Political activity is one of the means for the fulfilment of religious life and in politics is sought the satisfaction of that inexorable urge in man for justice and liberty. The realization of man's deepest self and of the self of others and service of humanity can be accomplished through service to one's family and then to the nation; for service is not of a competitive or of antagonistic nature: it is based on love and not on hatred. Next, there should be proper organization of nations into self-conscious coherent units before the establishment of an international order is contemplated. Organization means in every country the economic, political and social unification to be achieved through a spontaneous voluntary process in which every unit manifests its latent capacities and contributes ultimately to the spiritual wellbeing of the community.

As “In our Father's House there are many mansions”, the proper thing is to try to effect a federation of these, and of interests, and to bring about a reconciliation of the terms of antithesis without unduly emphasizing or ignoring any of the interests. Consequently, there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. Gandhi does not believe in the doctrine that all men are equal in social conditions. In his kingdom, the rich are expected to be the servants of the poor; the wise, the servants of the ignorant; the strong, the servants of the weak, and the superior, the servants of the inferior.

As the right to self-government is inherent in every human being, so, too, self-government is the inherent and inalienable right of every nation, and no one or no nation has a right to dominate or exploit another. Conflicts are bound to arise between individuals and the nation, and State and State; for, what is self-government in one case may be an infringement of self-government of another. Therefore, the develop-

ment of a society of spirits into a kingdom of justice and liberty must be necessarily a process of gradual growth of slow evolution rather than one of revolution or one of instantaneous new creation.

Gradual growth implies the principle that inspires man to an ever higher life, the recognition of law that is not imposed and enforced by authority from without, but one that comes from within and is enforced by man's Reason and Conscience. Law of man's own nature is liberty. God appeals to the divine in man and finds in man himself the power to enforce all laws. Thus, the foundation of liberty is the recognition of divinely organized law. God's will is manifested in the structure of the human soul and it finds its expression in the voice of the human reason and the human conscience. The mission of each individual is unique, and for the fulfilment of that mission every individual should be left to himself to develop the law of his own being. Gandhi's faith in democracy is based on his faith in human personality, and when all are developed and become conscious of the divine within them, they would be brought together into a great social organism.

Self-government is a process of self-purification by which evil which is an inexpugnable element of human nature is checked and corrected and good instincts of man are brought out. *Swaraj* is a growth from within and is opposed to rule of any kind which is dominated by self-will, unrulled by law, uninfluenced by public opinion, ungoverned by conscience and unrestrained by religion. It is a process by which a great moral power overcomes a great physical power by converting it, by annihilating in the mind that overpowering sense of social distinctions, prejudice, passion and superstition which stifle man's growth.

The demand for self-government is a demand for organic



growth from within, and "self-government in a country is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule". Gandhi writes: "All outward oppression is but the shadow and effect of the real oppression within....Let men cease to oppress themselves and no man shall oppress his brother. Men legislate for an outward freedom, and yet continue to render such freedom impossible of achievement by fostering an inward condition of enslavement. All outward forms of bondage and oppression will cease when man ceases to be the willing bond-slave of passion, error and ignorance."

The development of world's inner unity, her autonomy and her freedom from external and internal limitations and the achievement of the perfection of the individual can be accomplished not by coercion or by agreement but only by the method of satyagraha which stands for truth, for love, and for non-violence. Gandhi says: "It is not merely an individualistic principle capable of solving all personal, intellectual or spiritual problems: it is the greatest social principle capable of solving all problems of corporate life". Every individual has a capacity to determine Truth for himself and in its pursuit non-violence is essential. Pursuit of truth does not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent. The latter must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy, and as patience is self-suffering, the doctrine of satyagraha comes to mean "the vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self". Truth is the end and aim of existence and it is the basis not only of religion and of metaphysics but of social life. Life is an organic whole and truth is as fundamental in the worldly affairs of men, in politics and social life, as in dharma and Vedanta.

Truth is to be made effective through love, for, there is no other powerful agency to convert people's souls than love.

Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life, the breathing of an eternal spirit through the temporal world. Religion is love and non-violence is the substitution of the law of love for the law of force. In the syllogistics of the human spirit, life and love are convertible terms. Non-violence is not a gospel of passivity born of *tamas* (principle of inertia), mere absence of violence and meek acceptance of evil and tyranny, but a gospel of manliness born of *satva*. It is the law of human species as violence is the law of the brute world.

“If the world”, Gandhi says, “believes in the existence of of the soul it must be recognized that soul-force is better than bodily force; it is the sacred principle of love that moves mountains. On us lies the responsibility of living out this sacred law. We are not concerned with results”. The conquest of man and the world by means of Truth is Love. The State shall be violating its fundamental right if it interposes and prohibits the quest of man after the Infinite and Truth carried on in one’s own way with his own faculties, after his own fashion. Search after Truth is the absolute right of every man; absolute because God is accessible to all men; and absolute because this acquaintance with God is the divine end of his existence. It is the one sufficient proof of the grandeur and awfulness of our nature that we have faith in God, for no merely finite being can possibly believe in the Infinite.

Non-violence is not resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. It is no negative absence of activity, any more than beauty is the absence of ugliness. On the contrary, Gandhi says: “The non-violence of my conception is a more active and a more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and therefore moral opposition to im-

moralties. Non-violence is the vindication of love for the opponent and deeper brotherhood, and this makes the individual go through suffering for the sake of the enemy”.

It is only through suffering that the inner springs of man are sounded, and the whole man is moved from the depth of his consciousness, and the ground is prepared for a great and lasting change. The social revolution that is based on the love of mankind towards one another will be lasting and permanent, for it encompasses all aspects of human life and co-ordinates them to the fulfilment of human destiny. Gandhi says: “It may take long to lay the wires for international love, but the sanction of international non-co-operation in preference to continued physical compulsion is a distinct progress towards the ultimate and real solution”.

The achievement of democracy in this respect is little, though there are movements elsewhere in other parts of the world toward a radical humanitarian form of democracy and social order. In some States may be found the vanguard and the fighting line of a newer democracy: an experimental laboratory as in Russia, where a new kind of political policy is being tried and a fairly scientific system of legal and moral regulation is envisaged to restrain monopolistic tendencies of capital and elevate standards of living of the working classes. Capitalist democracies, too, have attempted common services of peace by international co-operation and by provision for peaceful settlement of international disputes and by the development of the means of peaceful change. There is the existence, as the history of the world during the last twenty-five years bears witness, of a universal juridical conscience which is always alert and which condemns at least in the moral sphere all imperfections in the body of rules written or unwritten. The trouble which an aggressor takes to secure *de jure* recognition of his sovereignty over the country which

he has violently absorbed, and the importance which he attaches to it are also a tribute to the juridical character of the human community.

It would be more correct to say that the attempt at democracy has failed rather than that democracy has failed. In the words of Alfred Rosenberg in *Democratic Socialism*: "Democratic self-government developed historically out of the life of the working classes exhibits a remarkable power of resistance. In modern times no real democracy has yet perished". Democracy is not a negative idea and once put on the defence it is lost. It is a positive idea and it justifies itself only when its positive aspects such as freedom and justice are emphasized. It requires a state of mind which through continuous effort at mutual accommodation builds anew the community within which it dwells.

To the extent democracy is a great human adventure, and the sense of adventure is an emotional matter, emotions are to be disciplined and the attention of the student and the man in the street who are taught more the facts of every-day life because of the dominance of economic determinism is to be turned towards eternal verities. There is the need, as the present wars show, for a new philosophy of life, for an ideology that emphasizes the relevance of morals to diplomacy and demands the readiness of individuals and States to be ruled by a decent deference to the judgment of mankind and to a willing co-operation in order to establish the maximum of moral authority. Satyagraha suggests a new technique to fight the evils which have not been eliminated by other methods of arbitration or war. It aims at bringing the economic and political life of humanity into harmony with its basic ethical and religious ideals.

There is the enunciation of a moral equivalent for war, and an enthusiasm for a new civilization founded on justice

and Truth. That Truth should be followed at all costs and hazards as an end in itself is the one certain mark of the divine quality of the human soul. The beauty of life consists in its dedication to Truth; and the presence in any society of a body of men devoted to the disinterested pursuit of Truth is a great moral antiseptic, quite apart from the value which may attach to the results of their unfettered speculation and living.

It is true, likewise, that means, as Aldous Huxley says, condition the ends, and if hatred and militarism are evoked to win the war, they cannot be cast aside when we come to make the peace. Thus, the spirit in which we make war will inform the spirit in which we make peace and our peace will sow the seed of future wars. The means that are commended must therefore inculcate a general view of the sinfulness of war and a personal and insuperable aversion to the destruction of human life.

Respect for human life, deep personal repugnance to the shedding of blood and aversion from violence and brutality, which Gandhism preaches, are not only the essential parts of private morality but furnishes an important part of the ethical foundation upon which the structure of any civilized State is erected. Herbert Fisher in his book *The Common Weal* writes: "The more widely respect for human life is spread throughout the community, the less likely will that community be to enter lightly into war or even to be defaced in its domestic life by the cruelties of the savage nature".

In furnishing a moral basis to politics and suggesting a new technique of non-violence, Gandhi appears as a pioneer standing upon the threshold of a future which no man has yet explored. With inward courage he rides the storms; whether his own voyage ends in shipwreck or in safety, in triumph or in disaster, his will be the high satisfaction of having sailed

the seas and taken his chances. Each epoch develops silently and gradually out of the preceding epochs, as dawn succeeds the night and day the dawn, and Gandhian experiment may pass into history as the silver lining of the clouds that hide a brighter day for mankind.

## Dr. S. M. Tewari

*discusses Gandhi's concept of democracy in relation to non-violence.*

The topic on which I propose to write is "Gandhi's Concept of Democracy : A Doctrine of Ten Meanings". For, Gandhi is known to the contemporary world as the one man more than any other who is mainly responsible for the initiation of religious spirit into the province of politics. "Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along."<sup>1</sup> Before his advent on the political scene, religion and politics were divorced from each other. He made

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1. *Selections from Gandhi*, by N.K. Bose, p. 31, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad (1957)

a Herculean effort to re-unite them into holy wedlock by spiritualizing politics, injecting germs of truth into diplomacy, introducing principles of non-violence into democracy. Non-violence includes faith in human brotherhood, and democracy is the most effective and ethical form of government to render it into visible form. Democracy is but applied religion of non-violence.

1. *As a Form of Government*: What, according to Gandhi, is democracy? Democracy is derived from two Greek words 'demos' and 'kratos', meaning people and power, respectively. It means the rule (cracy) of the people. Gandhi agrees with this etymological meaning of democracy when he says: "True democracy is the *swaraj* of the masses."<sup>2</sup> And by *swaraj* he means the "government by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters".<sup>3</sup> Gandhi's this view of democracy mirrors it as a form of government. Parliamentary democracy, which is based on faith in man and yet recognizes his fallibility, is a political arrangement that helps us to be governed by our chosen leaders.

Mazzini defined democracy "as the progress of all through all under the leadership of the wisest and the best".<sup>4</sup> Political democracy fails if the people are not sufficiently enlightened

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2. *Ali Men are Brothers*, p. 180, compiled and edited by Krishna Kripalani, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad (1960)

3. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 163, compiled by R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao, Oxford University, Cambridge (1946)

Cp. Lincoln defines democracy as "government of the people, for the people and by the people".

4. Quoted in *Freedom and Culture*, p. 75, by S. Radhakrishnan, G.A. Natesan & Co., Madras (1946)



to be able to select wise and intelligent representatives. Unfortunately the leaders of today are neither wise nor intelligent. They are clever and selfish. The result is periodical violence and bloodshed within the nation and clash of arms with neighbouring nations. There are frequent floor-crossings and defections, no-confidence motions and changes in leadership. If democracy is to survive, wise men must take part in government. Plato told us long ago: "The penalty that good men pay for refusing to take part in government is to live under the government of bad men."<sup>5</sup> Gandhi knew it full well. That is why he never avoided to take part in politics.

Parliamentary democracy, in the opinion of Gandhi, is not immune to corruption.<sup>6</sup> Corruption of the best is the worst. "Real *swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority."<sup>7</sup>

2. *As a Defender of Individuality*: The individual is the pivot round which all democratic institutions and activities cluster. It is the conviction of Gandhi that the fundamental principle of democracy is the dignity and freedom of the individual. He says: "If individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automation and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a

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5. Quoted in *On Nehru*, p. 62, by S. Radhakrishnan, Publications Division, Delhi (1965)

6. *The Wit and Wisdom of Gandhi*, p. 97, edited by Homer A. Jack, The Perennial Press, Bombay (1961)

7. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 163

denial of individual freedom"<sup>8</sup>. The individual is its master, creator, designer and dominator. Man makes, unmakes and remakes society out of the fulness of his freedom. The *Mahabharata* tells us that there is nothing higher than man, *na manusat sresthataram hi kiñcit*.<sup>9</sup> Lord Buddha exalted man to the highest level. Sankara went so far as to equate him with Godhead, *jivobrahmaivanaparah*.

Respect for the individual is the moral basis of a democratic society: "I am a lover of my own liberty and so I would do nothing to restrict yours".<sup>10</sup> Said Lincoln: "I would not like to be a master even as I would not like to be a slave." Even the most powerful ruler must say with Shakespeare's Richard II:

I live with bread like you, feel want,  
Taste grief, need friends; subjected thus  
How can you say to me I am a king?

In the eye of democracy there is no difference between prince and peasant, ruler and ruled, king and commoner.

But nowadays there is a tendency to look upon the individual as the helpless creature of the State. The State is becoming more and more powerful day by day and the individual is getting lost in it. "I look upon an increase of the power of the State with the greatest fear", writes Gandhi, "because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress".<sup>11</sup> Democracy, as conceived by Gandhi, is a defender of individuality, a preserver of the spirit in man.

8. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 131, edited by N.B. Sen, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, (1960)

9. Cp. Pascal tells us that man is a thinking reed superior to all the unthinking forces that fill the universe.

10. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 131

11. *The Wit and Wisdom of Gandhi*, p. 96

3. *As a Discipline*: To Gandhi, democracy means discipline. "The word *swaraj* is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means."<sup>12</sup> Democracy stands for ethical discipline. To be free is to be responsible: "The higher the status of a man, the greater is his responsibility."<sup>13</sup> It is the firm faith of Gandhi that "we cannot learn discipline by compulsion."<sup>14</sup> Discipline comes from within and is not imposed from without.

Discipline, according to Gandhi, is an aid to freedom. The higher the freedom, the greater is the need for discipline. "The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to oneself and one's neighbours."<sup>15</sup>

"If we want to cultivate a true sense of democracy", in the opinion of Gandhi, "we cannot afford to be intolerant."<sup>16</sup> To be tolerant is to be humane and civilized. Democracy comes naturally to him who is habituated, normally, to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine.<sup>17</sup> "Democracy disciplined and enlightened", says Gandhi, "is the first thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed."<sup>18</sup> It carries in itself the seeds of self-destruction. Democracy, on the other hand, should be able to inculcate discipline among its members. For, "no reliance

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12. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 163

13. *Ibid.*, p. 162

14. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 74

15. *Ibid.*, p. 69

16. *Ibid.*, p. 68

17. *Ibid*

18. *Ibia.*, p. 69

can be placed upon an organization which is not able to exercise effective control over its members.”<sup>19</sup>

4. *As an Institution:* According to Gandhi, self-realization is the *summum bonum* of life. “What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political fields, are directed to this same end.”<sup>20</sup> Gandhi says : “Democracy is a great institution and therefore it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not avoidance of democracy but reduction of possibility of abuse to a minimum.”<sup>21</sup>

5. *As a Distributor of Power:* In the view of Gandhi, democracy means decentralization, distribution of power. Power should not be centralized. An independent Judiciary and an independent Audit Services Commission restrain governments from arbitrary or tyrannical acts. These institutions require to be protected from executive interference and political pressure. It is the only way to develop standards of public life, for even “a most democratic minister is likely to go wrong without ceaseless watch from the public.”<sup>22</sup> Eternal vigilance is the price which the institutions of democracy demand from the people. “Power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people.”<sup>23</sup> “The democratic spirit”,

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19. *Ibid.*, p. 74

20. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. XIV, by M. K. Gandhi Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad (1959). See also *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 197j

21. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 69

22. *Ibid*

23. *The Wit and Wisdom of Gandhi*, p. 96

in Gandhi's view, "demands that a most autocratic minister must yield to a people's will or resign office."<sup>24</sup> No man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent (Lincoln).<sup>25</sup> Even the best of men are coarsened and hardened by excess of power. Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. "Rulers nowadays have lost sight of their duty, so that instead of setting an example of selflessness and devotion they give themselves up to pleasure and use their powers as an instrument of self-indulgence."<sup>26</sup> Therefore power should be distributed among the people, for "when people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of people is reduced to a minimum."<sup>27</sup>

6. *As an Instrument*: Democracy, according to Gandhi, is an instrument for an all-round development of man and society. He writes: "Democracy must in essence mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all."<sup>28</sup> In and through it, we attempt to raise the living standards of the people and to give opportunities to every man to develop his personality. It must lead to the establishment of an ethical and spiritual ordering of society.

7. *As a Respector of Minority Opinion*: For Gandhi, democracy is not only decision of the majority but also deference for the opinion of the minority. "The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the

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24. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 69

25. *U.S I S. Pamphlet*, New Delhi ( 1959 )

26. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 196

27. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

28. *The Wit and Wisdom of Gandhi*, p. 96

majority, no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I therefore believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.”<sup>29</sup> In matters of conscience, the law of majority as such has no place.<sup>30</sup> We have done away with the divine right of kings; even governments by elected majorities have no divine rights. A democratic government, i.e., government by the majority, is open to grave abuses. Lord Action rightly observed: “Government by the whole people, being the government of the most numerous and most powerful class, is an evil of the same nature as unmixed monarchy, and requires, for nearly the same reasons, institutions that shall protect it against itself and shall uphold the permanent reign of law against arbitrary revolutions of opinion.”<sup>31</sup>

That is why Gandhi advises: “Let us not push the mandate theory to ridiculous extremes and become slaves to resolutions of majorities. That would be a revival of brute force in a more virulent form. If rights of minorities are to be respected, the majority must tolerate and respect their opinion and action. It will be the duty of the majority to see to it that the minorities receive a proper hearing and are not otherwise exposed to insults. *Swaraj* will be an absurdity if individuals have to surrender their judgment to the majority.”<sup>32</sup> In matters of truth, majority is no authority.

8. *As a Provider for Freedom of Thought and Expression:* For a sound democracy, in the opinion of Gandhi, we require

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29. *Ibid.*, p. 97

30. *Ibid*

31. Quoted in *Current Events*, Vol. IV, No. 8, p. 11, August 1958, Dehra Dun

32. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 156

freedom of thought and expression. This demands respect for the opponent. "Democracy means respect for the opponent in politics, ethics and religion (Radhakrishnan)."<sup>33</sup> In a real democracy there is always an 'opposition'. It may not compel agreement but it compels thought. Authoritarian methods of suppression of opposition are dangerous. Gandhi observes: "Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or having listened make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst with the limits that nature has put upon our understanding we act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it if there is any."<sup>34</sup> The test is whether it gives democratic rights to the opposition; whether it allows freedom of thought, speech and association to its opponents. If a party or government brooks no rivals and no honest differences within it, it is anything but democratic.

9. *As a Method*: Each age has its problems and ours is the most problematic of all ages. Writes Gandhi: "The democracy of my conception is wholly inconsistent with the use of physical force for enforcing its will."<sup>35</sup> In democracy we try to persuade our opponents by the power of reason and love, and not by the force of arms and hate. It is a method to replace threat by thought, revolution by resolution, bullet by ballot-box.

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33. *The Concept of Man*, pp. 10-11. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London (1960)

34. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 70

35. *The Wit and Wisdom of Gandhi*, p. 95

The democratic method aims at adjustment of conflicting views. "Democracy", in the words of Gandhi, "cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within."<sup>36</sup> Even "good government is no substitute for self-government."<sup>37</sup> "To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be far harder than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms."<sup>38</sup> "When we improve, the Government is also bound to improve."<sup>39</sup> Inner improvement results in outer betterment.

10. *As a Way of Life*: Above all, democracy, for Gandhi, is essentially a way of life. The democratic ideals—freedom and dignity of the individual, rule of law, economic opportunity for all citizens, social justice, political freedom, desire for peace, love of truth and non-violence—we have set before ourselves must become part of our life and flesh. The democratic way of life requires us to adopt peaceful co-existence and co-operative living. It asks us to strive patiently and persistently for mutual understanding, explore every avenue to reach agreed settlement.

The democratic way of living—which is also the Gandhian way—teaches us to try to persuade our opponents to agree with our point of view.

Gandhi prescribes the following qualities for a true democrat:

1. *A Defender of Liberty*: According to Gandhi, the first and foremost test of a real democrat is defence of liberty, personal, national and international. "The true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and, therefore, his country's and ultimately that of the whole

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36. *Ibid.*, p. 96

37. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 163

38. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 203

39. *Ibid.*, p. 114



of mankind".<sup>40</sup> Liberty is the life-blood of democracy. And a true democrat guards it by means of non-violence alone.

2. *A Born Disciplinarian*: The second test of a genuine democrat, in the opinion of Gandhi, is discipline. "A born democrat is a born disciplinarian. Democracy comes naturally to him who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine. I claim to be a democrat both by instinct and training. Let those who are ambitious to serve democracy qualify themselves by satisfying first this acid test of democracy."<sup>41</sup> To a true democrat there is no deliverance from discipline. He who lacks discipline lacks the spirit of democracy. Democracy and discipline go together.

3. *Utterly Selfless*: Selflessness, in the view of Gandhi, is the third test of a democrat. "A democrat must be utterly selfless. He must think and dream not in terms of self or party but only of democracy. Only then does he acquire the right of civil disobedience."<sup>42</sup> Democracy and selfishness go ill together.

4. *Complete Identification with the Poorest*: According to Gandhi, complete identification with the poorest of the world is the fourth test of a democrat. "I claim to be a democrat if complete identification with the poorest of mankind, an intense longing to live no better than they and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best of one's ability, can entitle one to make it".<sup>43</sup>

5. *Humility*: Humility, for Gandhi, is the fifth test of a

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40. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 158

41. *All Men are Brothers*, p. 186

42. *Ibid*

43. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 156

Cp. Radhakrishnan: "A true democrat should identify himself with the poor and the outcast."—*Religion in a Changing World*, p. 167, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, (1967)

democrat".<sup>44</sup> It is easy to acquire the forms of democracy but difficult to imbibe its spirit—that sensitive adjustment of the self to the infinitely varied demands of other persons. Essentially, a democrat is one who has that trait of humility: to believe that he may possibly be mistaken and his opponent probably right. Like non-violence, democracy is the farthest limit of humility.<sup>45</sup> And a true democrat reduces himself to "zero".<sup>46</sup>

After making a thorough analysis of Gandhi's concept of democracy, we come to the conclusion that it is quite capacious and comprehensive in its scope. It is a multi-levelled, concentric concept of far-reaching consequence, a principle of paramount practice, a doctrine of ten meanings.

Gandhi looks at democracy as a form of government, as a defender of individuality, as a discipline, as an institution, as a distributor of power, as an instrument of social and economic content, as a respecter of minority opinion, as a provider for freedom of thought and expression, as a method of approach in the settlement of problems, and as a way of life. A true democrat, in his opinion, is a defender of liberty with purely non-violent means, is a born disciplinarian, is utterly selfless, is one who completely identifies himself with the poorest of mankind, and is essentially humble.

The Gandhian view of democracy gives us a vision, a way of life, a style of living, asks us to accept ideals, norms or standards of behaviour, and apply them in all spheres and at all levels of life, individual and social, national and international, for the good of all.

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44. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 69

45. Cf. Gandhi: "Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility". *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 371

46. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 229

## Dr. V. Jagannadham

*defines democracy and non-violence and points out the various forces militating against their co-existence.*

The two terms are vague and they mean different things to different people. Acknowledgedly, both are desirable and both are complementary to one another. As a matter of principle, democracy cannot be said to be complete where violent means are adopted in the management of public affairs. In practice, however, democracies exist amidst violence but they continue to make efforts to inculcate among people the habit of conducting public affairs through non-violent means. When we analyse the theory and practice of democracy and non-violence we must bear in mind the persistence of a gulf between profession and practice. We should judge the issue more from the standpoint of sustained efforts than the full attainment of the ideal. Ideals, by definition, shift,

like a horizon, as efforts march towards them. The dimensions of the theory and practice of both democracy and non-violence fully reflect, throughout their historical course, the efforts chasing the goals.

The meaning of the phrases and the scope of discussion thereunder are neither clear nor specific. What we mean by democracy may be a little more clear than what we understand by the term non-violence. Democracy is often used in two senses: (1) as a way of life and (2) as a form of government. In both senses, the emphasis of democracy is upon justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. As a way of life, democracy presupposes among its votaries an eagerness to cultivate and follow a psychology of infinite patience and mutual tolerance. It also assumes a spirit of mutual co-operation in settling private and public disputes through the established procedures of law or through arbitration or through ballot-boxes. As a form of government, its concern is with the management of public affairs through consensus, if not consent, arrived at by adherence to the principle that majority has authority to rule over the minorities, who, in course of time, may aspire to win majority through fair and free elections and secret ballot.

Government by persuasion and majority is found to be a convenient, even though it is not a perfect, arrangement for wise management of public affairs. Counting heads is regarded as less harmful than breaking heads. In this sense democracy, if accepted and followed, offers the most favourable field for non-violence to grow.

The term non-violence does not easily allow itself to be interpreted so clearly or concretely as democracy. As an ideal, the term non-violence should mean non-injury to body, mind and spirit of any living thing or being. In the present essay, this usage of the term is out of context. Here it would

be appropriate to regard it as meaning an absence of destruction through violent means of person, property and rights of citizens. This limited interpretation of the term may have significance only when we relate it to democracy as a way of life but not to democracy as a form of government because the latter, by definition, is a legal repository of all coercive authority recognized as essential for the existence and functioning of the political association, namely, the State. Even then, non-violence may have greater significance for democracy within a State than in the relations among the States because inter-State relations, notwithstanding the efforts of supra nation-State organizations such as the U.N. to establish democracy in the international sphere, are still governed by the law of nature rather than by recognized systems of jurisprudence.

The scope of the discussion of non-violence in democracies could be reduced to the latter's two recognized areas, namely, democracy as a way of life and as a form of government. From a theoretical or ideal point of view, we could prescribe non-violence as a prerequisite for the perfect functioning of democracy. This prescription, however, would be like Euclidean straight line because the human citizens who are to follow the prescriptions in day-to-day life's relationships are not wholly convinced of nor committed to democracy or non-violence to the extent of sacrificing private comforts for public good. Nor do the bulk of the citizens, who are imperfect in many ways, fulfil the psychological assumptions underlying democracy, namely, infinite patience, mutual tolerance and eagerness to settle disputes through law courts or ballot-boxes. For this reason, there is probably a need to modify theoretical prescriptions to correspond to positive realities. There are also some who believe in violence as a surgical therapy to remedy certain deep-rooted maladies like tyranny, inequalities

and injustices. There are others who find justification for war as a means of redressal of past injustices and as a preventive for emergence of injustices or inequities in future. Many statesmen, even of democracies, find it necessary to be prepared for defending themselves even by use of violent means against external enemies and internal malcontents. This indeed is the *raison d'être* for State and Government. All these factors, namely, imperfections of human nature, theories of surgical and preventive uses of war and violent means to protect the State against external and internal saboteurs, provide enough room for heavy and mounting investments on instruments of destruction and military and police personnel. All calculations point to an increase in investments on innovations in destructive weapons. Modern developments in science and technology are also facilitating the major political powers to pile up enormous weapons while publicly professing, pronouncing and even preparing for abandonment of violent means of settlement of international differences and disputes. Internal disorders too are on the increase and the use of violence during times of disturbance both by those in Government and those outside of Government are not uncommon.

We may here note the most glaring paradox of our time, namely, the increase in concern about safeguarding both democracy and non-violence being simultaneously followed by an increase in investment upon destructive weapons. Warlike preparations are no doubt a prelude to war. The phenomenon of talk about peace being underlined by keeping the powder dry is probably an age old maxim that will remain true for a long time to come. The paradox reflects the eternal human dilemma.

The above conclusion may sound Hobbesian and unpalatable but it is true. Whether democracy and non-violence, one without the other or the two together, are desirable or not

is not the question at issue. There are many who support the view that the two are desirable and that they should co-exist, grow and thrive together but what are the chances for them to thrive together ? What forces are militating against their co-existence and could the adverse forces be eliminated and favourable forces be promoted?

Fear is the biggest force that militates against the co-existence of democracy and non-violence in international relations. This may be elaborated by reference to the support for warlike preparations by each nation on account of fear of similar preparations and aggressive intentions by neighbours. Such fears are scouted by the division of the world into ideological power-blocs and the clash of ideologies alongside with clash of interests.

Next to fear, there is also an eagerness to spread one's sphere of influence in terms of political or economic ideologies, systems and interests. This type of proselytization is growing in modern times in the place of the crude forms of spreading of religions in medieval times and sheer military conquests in ancient times. The brutal instinct to commit aggression and thereby show one's glory does not seem to have declined, much less disappeared, in human breast.

While mutual fear and extension of self-interests are sustaining violence or preparations for violent action in the international sphere, their counterparts inside the nation are race and class conflict, and competition for success measured in terms of material possessions and status positions. Race conflicts have their genesis in centuries of prejudices and isolation. The source of class conflict is attributed to the gross inequalities in the distribution of material wealth. Even though the democratic welfare States and the not-so-free socialist States have been administering palliatives to inequalities, the goal of equality seems to be eluding the grasp of all. Ne-

vertheless the war-cry of equality is likely to generate many tensions that breed violent aggressions and armed overthrows of established institutions, including governments. The philosophy and action programme of class conflict is bound to continue for a long time as a seed bed of violence.

Competition, on the other hand, is more subtle and less manifest as a source of violence. Nevertheless, the spirit of competition is both healthy and unhealthy. In its healthy form, it generates a spirit of emulation, encourages constructive efforts and helps individuals and groups to exert the utmost and best in themselves. This holds good with reference to enterprising, able and resourceful persons. But those who do not have these qualities feel jealous of those who have. The 'have-nots' claim a share in the comforts of the 'haves' without the exertions of the latter. Somehow the number of 'have-nots' is always larger than that of the 'haves' and the principles and practices of democracy, particularly of majority rule, favour distribution policies more than productivity policies. If there is not enough to go round to satisfy the bulk of the 'have-nots', there is bound to be frustration, aggression and destruction. The 'alienation', 'uprooting' and 'impersonality' of occupational and community life in industrial-urban areas foment the spread of the above tendencies. Consequently we find a great deal of unrest and indiscipline manifesting themselves in violent outbursts.

It would be wrong to regard fear, conflict or competition as new phenomena. This is far from the case. These have been as old as human societies and have been responsible for much violence throughout human history. They have inspired many towards glorious exploits, valuable ideologies and useful innovations. These still continue to do so. What one should emphasize here is the large-scale tragedy caused by violent destruction that is neither necessary nor



inevitable in democracies provided mankind cultivates virtues such as patience, tolerance, understanding and co-operation. That these virtues are less in evidence today than before is indicated by such assassinations as those of Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. These great personalities embody in them the urge to remove racial and class barriers and to orientate competition for greater social, economic and political justice. The assassination of great men like the above by mentally ill individuals through violent means poses the problems of democracy and non-violence in a sharp focus. Could a democracy, as a government, afford to be idealistic and sentimental about using violence in the discharge of its legitimate duties internally and externally? Could it afford to abdicate the use of violence as government? If, as government, violence, in its institutional form or as a necessary instrument of security, could not be abandoned, the malcontents resort to counter-violence to overthrow what they regard as unjust, unfair or indecent. In other words, wherever violence exists as a recognized and established institution, it breeds counter-violence. We may safely say that besides injustice, inequalities, tyrannies and exploitations which stimulate the use of violence to end or mend them, the presence of violence in its institutional form is a potential source of counter-violence.

However, we may draw attention to a ray of hope in this gloomy conclusion. Physical and mental isolation and fear of strangers and changes were responsible for much violence in the past inside and outside of narrow kin or territorial groups. With the fast fading away of these isolations, the old forms of violence are dying but, unfortunately, new forms of violence are coming in their place. Instead of crude jealousies among sex, age or occupational groups resulting in open violent conflict, today, we have boredom and frustration

gnawing the spirit of individuals and goading them to find satisfaction in destructions of person, property and rights either of himself or others. Instead of face to face wars of brutal kind, today we witness nuclear bombs destroying the innocent and the helpless along with the malicious and involved in modern wars. Mankind could not be more brutalized than this but mankind seems equally helpless in protecting itself against this mad-kind of race for excellence in perfecting the instruments of destruction.

We thus witness the human race at the cross-roads of civilization. It has at its disposal the means to elevate itself or destroy itself. Democracies are at one time believed to offer greater opportunities for liberating mankind from the chains of injustice, tyranny, inequalities and exploitation. Nearly two centuries of history since American and French Revolutions have brought many disillusionments about the claims of democracy to liberate mankind from its madness. The opposites of democracies are today regarded by many as fighting the cause of the exploited for liberation and justice. Votaries of democracy are perplexed about deciding the tenability of the claims of each. One thing is however certain—whether democracies or opposites, no government could afford to be sentimental or idealistic about non-violence.

## Dr. R. R. Diwakar

*observes that democracy without non-violence as its mode of operation has no future.*

These two words, 'democracy' and 'non-violence', are very important for India and the world today more than at any other time in history. Both the concepts and the words are ancient, almost as ancient as human society itself. They are words which are very potent and pregnant with meaning and their close interrelation holds perhaps the key to the future peaceful progress of human civilization.

Words may be said to have their own life and evolution too, like all living things. Democracy and non-violence are words which are still evolving and gathering meaning as humanity goes on practising them. Their outer forms remain, but their connotation and significance for us increase and develop with the progress of human history.

Taken separately, these words have very long histories of their own behind them. Both have philosophies, and almost metaphysics, of their own. Their study is very fascinating, interesting and useful to students of human relations, of sociology and psycho-social development. But within the space of this brief article one would rather like to deal only with the practical and common-sense aspects of these words, in the context of and as applicable to present-day problems, although even these require a certain amount of probing into their deeper meaning and interrelation. Before I do so, however, I should like to emphasize that both democracy and non-violence are but means; the end, so far as human society is concerned, is obviously to attain and establish a universal community of human beings which shall be peaceful, happy and progressive in the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual fields and which shall give, at the same time, full and free scope to each man and woman to attain the highest of which he or she is capable. Though I have emphasized that these are only means, I may nevertheless make bold to say that a harmonious synthesis of democracy and non-violence is such a potent means that it answers to the dictum: 'means are ends'. If we pursue these means, the ends will be seen to be already involved in them.

The word 'democracy' and the concept it stands for are very old. It is a mistake to think that it is only a Western concept. What is Western in the concept, as it obtains today, is the particular interpretation and the form it has attained by experimentation and evolution. But this form cannot be said to be either the best form or the final form or the only form. Democracies and republics, like that of the Vrijjis at the time of the Buddha (sixth century B.C.) were working in India centuries before Christ and probably some of them were earlier than the Greek republics. There are references

to republics even in the Atharva Veda (e.g. the Sabha and the Samiti). Village Communities run on democratic principles were common in Russia (e.g. the mirs). In India, the ancient panchayat system is still alive in the villages, although it has lost its prestige, purity and republican vigour. It will thus be seen that the word and concept of democracy are not exclusively Western, nor are they the monopoly of the West. Respect for collective wisdom has been a common feature of normal human groups everywhere in the world.

It may seem rather strange to us at this distance of time that democracy was once not a very respectable thing in the West. It was equated almost with mob-rule. That was, perhaps, why Aristotle belittled it and Plato attacked it. In comparatively modern times, there was a difference of opinion about its use between Jefferson and Adams. The American Founding Fathers were especially afraid of the word and they used the expression 'Republican Principles'. Alexander Hamilton has gone to the extent of saying that even the well-behaved and orderly democracy of Athens had not 'one good feature of good government'. Later a distinction was made between 'democracy', which meant direct rule by the people, and 'republic', which meant rule through representatives. Before we arrive at the classic definition of democracy by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, we had similar definitions by Cooper in 1795 and by Theodore Parker in 1850. But many things have happened since Lincoln declared at Gettysburg that democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Democracy is no longer restricted to the domain of politics and political institutions. It is a system, a way of life, which gives the highest importance to individual freedom and individual initiative. It believes in the inherent capacity of the human spirit to grow, in the inherent right of the human

spirit to progress in an atmosphere of freedom and of full scope. It is as comprehensive as life itself and believes that all social activities should be organized on a democratic basis—on willing co-operation, collective thinking, and majority decision.

In essence, democracy is decision by discussion, action according to majority decision, and implicit in it is freedom to individuals and groups to convert the majority to their own view by every peaceful and moral means but never by violence and force, open or implied. This naturally involves what are called the fundamental rights and free access to the instruments of persuasion and their full and free use. It is here that the proper working of the principle of democracy in any field demands the observance of non-violence, of ahimsa, as the basic rule of conduct between individual and individual, group and group, and between majorities and minorities. It has been the constant endeavour of democracy to substitute reason for blind force, persuasion for coercion and moral means for immoral ones. Conflict of interests there will always be, but the key to their best and constructive solution, with the highest advantage to all concerned, can only be through reason, through non-violence, through friendly approach and mutual understanding, and never, never through measuring of physical strength, through the use of deceit and destruction and through any violent means.

It is obvious that democracy without non-violence as its mode of operation will have no future and will collapse like a structure which has no firm foundation. It may also be noted that the principle of democracy is now in demand in international affairs too, in all activities which are of global nature. It is no longer only intra-national. The many international bodies, such as the U.N. and its auxiliaries, have to adopt democratic ways, partially or fully, in the con-

duct of their business. If there is going to be a world government some day, it will have to be a democracy based on non-violent conduct between member States.

Thus the future of democracy is far greater than its past and there seems to be no rational alternative to it if men and nations are to rise to their full stature with equal freedom and equal opportunities to all.

Before I go to non-violence and its significance, it may be refreshing to know how the Buddha, the apostle of peace and non-violence, upheld the principle of democracy and pinpointed the essence of democratic functioning. It is well known that he learnt much from the republics of the day around him and adopted for his religious organization a number of features from them. The republics, especially those of the Vrijiis and the Lichhavis, were full-fledged democracies with elections, assemblies, rules of procedure, voting by ballot and so on. Once on being asked by one of his closest disciples as to the strength and continuity of the republics, he is reported to have said as follows :

And the Blessed One said to him: 'Have you heard, Ananda, that the Vijjians hold full and frequent public assemblies?'

'Lord, so I have heard', replied he.

'So long, Ananda', rejoined the Blessed One, 'as the Vijjians hold these full and frequent public assemblies, so long may they be expected not to decline, but to prosper.' And in the like manner questioning Ananda, and receiving a similar reply, the Blessed One declared the other conditions which would ensure welfare of the Vijjian confederacy: 'So long, Ananda, as the Vijjians meet together in concord, and rise in concord, and carry out their undertakings in concord; so long as they enact nothing not already established (by reason), abrogate nothing that has been

already enacted, and act in accordance with the ancient institutions of the Vijjians as established in former days; so long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vijjian elders, and deem it a point of duty to hearken to their words; so long as no women or girls belonging to their clans are detained among them by force or abduction; so long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vijjian shrines in town or country, and allow not the proper offerings and rites, as formerly given and performed, to fall into desuetude ; so long as the rightful protection, defence, and support shall be fully provided for the arahats among them, so that arahats from a distance may enter the realm, and the arahats therein may live at ease—so long may the Vijjians be expected not to decline, but to prosper.’

If a friendly approach, solution of conflicts by mutual adjustment, decisions by discussion are some of the fundamentals of democracy, it is imperative that an atmosphere of non-violence, of non-fear ought to prevail. In an atmosphere of violence, or mutual fear and distrust, no discussions worth the name can be carried on and no democracy can function effectively and continuously. A non-violent atmosphere is the basic requirement of a functioning democracy.

It is in this context that we should try to find out the true meaning of non-violence. Though the word non-violence—ahimsa—is negative in form, it is really very positive in content. It means love, mutual trust, willingness to discuss and decide by discussion, readiness to co-operate and adjust and so on. Long ago when an atmosphere of violence may have prevailed in early gregarious societies, the then wise men must have asked people to cease to be violent, to become non-violent. But since then, the word has gathered meanings which have enriched it to such an extent that today it is the basic principle of any human society, be it only of two persons.



Even a single family cannot be built up if there is not an atmosphere of non-violence, of mutual love and trust.

In the early days, non-violence began to be preached and practised as an individual virtue. But it was soon found that without its adoption on a wider scale, however temporary or superficial it might be in different cases, no co-operative or collective effort was possible and no peace or harmony could be established. From an individual attainment it thus developed into a social necessity, and as human groups became larger and larger, non-violence became a *sine qua non* of social life. It is now an inseparable companion of democracy wherever it may function, whether in a club, in a social institution or in big republics like that of India or the United States. A non-violent atmosphere is a condition precedent for any success or progress or prosperity worth the name, in any organization, national or international.

But it was left to the genius of Gandhi to raise non-violence, ahimsa, to the dignity of the most noble and practical weapon of resistance to all evil and injustice, whether it be between man and man or nation and nation, and whether it is in the economic field or in the social or political field. Like democracy, it is a way of life. It is based on the realization that all life is one and on the faith that hatred begets hatred and love alone conquers hatred and engenders love. While democracy relies on non-violence for its functioning, progress and fulfilment, non-violence calls upon its votaries to use only democratic methods and rely on the power of love to persuade and convert the opponents. But be it remembered forever that both democracy and non-violence reinforced by each other must subserve the cause of truth, if they are to be effective and successful. Otherwise they build on sand, for nothing based on untruth can survive or prosper.

## K. Santhanam

*explains the implications of non-violence in a democratic society.*

Non-violence is a moral principle which can apply strictly only to individuals. Institutions have often claimed to be above moral laws. This has been particularly the case with religion which should be the embodiment of the moral law. Christianity evolved the Inquisition against dissenters and apostates. Islam permitted forcible conversion. Hinduism though it was generally tolerant and professed aversion towards violence encouraged fratricidal wars of conquest among rulers and had no hesitation to use physical force to put down untouchables, tribes and other people outside the caste system.

All political systems are ultimately based on force. Till the emergence of democracy, State-craft consisted of skilful use of force and diplomacy for self-preservation and aggran-

dizement. In democracy consent and persuasion have taken the first place and force is considered to be a means to be used in the last resort. Methods of election, discussion and propaganda are essentially principles of non-violence applied to politics. Therefore, it is not wrong to consider democracy as humanity's half-way house between violence and non-violence.

Yet, it has to be admitted that besides using force as the last resort, there are other tendencies in democracy which are inconsistent with non-violence. Democracy inevitably tends towards regulation of production and distribution of wealth and organization of social services and security through law. Laws passed by democratic legislatures have a large element of consent and consequently of non-violence in them. But as they also involve compulsion of minorities, they may be said to partake of violence. Therefore a democratic society which is eager to expand the area of non-violence to an increasing extent will try to encourage voluntary organization in the economic and social spheres. The co-operative movement, if it is run strictly on its fundamental principles, certainly embodies a non-violent approach to economics. Systems of voluntary insurance perform the same task in the field of social security. It must however be conceded that so long as wealth and property have to be protected and regulated by law, compulsory taxation for purposes of administration, social services and social security are inevitable. It cannot also be emphasized too strongly that the prevalence of non-violence in a democracy depends upon the number of individuals, especially among those who are elected to legislatures and local bodies, who are imbued with the spirit of non-violence. As I have already indicated, even they cannot altogether dispense with violence if democracy is to be effective. But it will be their endeavour to minimize the

use of violence and when it has to be used to adopt such forms as will not be injurious to human dignity and self-respect.

Since Indian independence, Gandhi's method of satyagraha has been sought to be applied to bring pressure on the Indian Government, Central and State, to adopt policies desired by the persons resorting to satyagraha or to reverse policies opposed by them. Even during the lifetime of Gandhi, the question was put to him. Gandhi gave a very cautious answer. In matters of large policy, satyagraha has no place in a democracy based on adult franchise. It would amount to coercion by the minority of the majority. The recent Kutch satyagraha is a good example. While the technique of satyagraha was adopted in conformity with Gandhi's teachings, its objective was totally opposed to any moral principle. Just before his death Gandhi fasted to induce the Government of India to keep its promise to pay Pakistan Rs. 55 crores in accordance with the partition agreements. The Government of India withheld this sum as Pakistan had allowed the troops to invade Kashmir and it had also interfered with its army. The refusal of money or supplies to an enemy may be considered a legitimate political policy but Gandhi thought that even as political strategy, breach of promise by a Government consisting of persons who had some faith in satyagraha and non-violence was improper. Yet, we find influential political leaders resorting to satyagraha to induce the Government of India to break its solemn promise to abide by the decision of arbitrators in the Indo-Pakistan dispute about the Rann of Kutch. Most of the satyagraha campaigns which have been organized by discontented factions have been similarly distortions of the true spirit of satyagraha. But it may be stated that where a party in power seeks to oppress a minority or deprive it of funda-

mental rights, non-violent direct action may become legitimate and even necessary. Adult franchise cannot be considered to be an absolute protection of human dignity and self-respect.

The growth of non-violence among individuals and institutions is in my view a very long-term business. It is only by remembering that non-violence is a dynamic principle which has to grow from within the souls of individuals and not a mere observance of certain rules and formulae that one can contribute to its growth.\*

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\*For more detailed treatment of certain forms of application of non-violence to the State, we may refer the readers to the author's book *Satyagraha and the State*.

## U. N. Dhebar

*says that democracy and non-violence can lead to a successful search for purpose of human existence and to fulfilment of it.*

He is a bold man who can say how things will shape for the concept of democracy the world over, or, even for the matter of that, in India. Man, the most vital instrument of nature, is being alienated by forces of materialism from the human purpose for which Nature gave him birth. This human purpose seems to be drying up rapidly resulting in total alienation of man. There is evidence of it, too abundant to require to be stated here.

The first duty of an Indian who believes in non-violence and democracy, both of which are in danger of total rejection, is to designate the purpose of human life and state the purpose in human terms for which man stands. One can write tomes on non-violence and democracy and expound their virtues

and good qualities. But they will be good copy book maxims in which children of today have hardly any interest.

It is an unmistakable sign of our times that youth, who is going to take over from us, is restive—angry. He is at a loose end and is seeking his bearings. He is in search of something that will provide a rational purpose for his existence. He is not concerned with ‘the-other-world’ in the least. He is not concerned with the books and sermons which try to dig in preconceived ideas in his mind. He resists governmental interference in any shape or form—be it the government on the political side, or in the university, or school, or home.

Youth is at logger-heads with all ‘past’; for he believes all the ‘past’ is built upon tall talk. He is not bothered about the right or the left although sometimes the right lay a claim to his loyalties, sometimes the left. The older generation has destroyed his faith in them for the sole reason that they have been following double standards. As Tennyson put it :

His honour rooted in dishonour stood  
His faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

To the youth of today the elderly generations are moulded after Lancelot in Tennyson’s terms. The intensity of temperamental and emotional reaction of the youth is a ubiquitous phenomenon from which even the communist countries are not free.

To write about democracy much more about non-violence, at a juncture like this, seems to be to preach in a vacant hall with nobody to listen. It is true it is a negative way of looking at the world problem. But in an age when distances are cracking with a speed faster than at any time in human history, both in physical and intellectual terms, the negative

reactions on impressionable minds of a negative approach in other parts of the world cannot be ignored as of no consequence. Indian society is a part of a world society not because it is mentioned in the Holy Book, but because science and technology have taken over the task of weaving them closely.

It is a difficult situation for India to face. It has already committed itself to certain values. Western countries who have committed themselves to democracy, long before India, are finding it hot to face their people. India cannot expect a better fate. I feel convinced that the first thing that is needed is not to discuss or talk about the virtues of the form or the methodology, but the purpose. Democracy is after all a form.

Non-violence is after all a methodology. Unless the purpose of life is clearly delineated, forms and methodology will be shaken to their foundations and may topple. I give utmost importance therefore to the human purpose. Human society should dedicate itself deliberately to the task of securing human happiness, conceding to every human being dignity, a purposeful existence and opportunity for growth, in a climate of love, hope and faith. There will be individuals who will be highly ambitious, politically speaking, and speaking in terms of riches of the world. But unless the human society for once realizes that its destiny is linked up with the destiny of common men and women, it must one day be prepared to be enmeshed into chaos, the like of which was only witnessed in the Dark Ages.

Democracy and non-violence provide the best means to achieve this purpose, no doubt. But we should be clear that we cannot isolate them from the world climate, or the climate at home, or the temper of the youth the world over or the temper of the masses in India labouring under difficulties from which they are seeking a respite.



This preamble I thought was necessary to serve the cause of Truth. Democracy can easily be a shroud to cover up social and economic disparities, as non-violence can be a shroud to cover up pernicious invisible violence through exploitation in the name of religion, class, caste, birth, or power of purse, or political power. In short, both democracy and non-violence should be pure stuff.

Democracy implies inculcation of spirit of brotherhood. "A democracy", as Gandhi said, "prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious, will land itself in chaos and may be self-destructed". Similarly, he said, "non-violence is the supreme virtue of the brave". A supine, inert mass, keeping quiet, despite severe social, political and economic stresses, was not the type of non-violent army he would have tolerated, much less permitted. World and India will have to concede that there is no place for happiness confined to a class or a caste or a group, whatever be its designation.

Days of individual happiness at the cost of the happiness of others were over very, very long ago. Days of group happiness at the cost of other groups are over too. We have to accept that freedom, happiness and peace have to be thought of as indivisible. Every individual has to work for it, and opportunities have to be provided to every individual to secure it. Democracy in its true and genuine form, with its social, economic and spiritual content, as expressed in the language of the true and genuine brotherhood of man, is coming before the people of the world as an irresistible demand which none can refuse to concede.

It is the future of this kind of democracy that is linked with the future of non-violence. Violence has failed to solve problems outside. It can hardly be justified at home. But this non-violence has also to be tempered with wisdom. It has to be considered in the context of the larger objective

of universal happiness—happiness of the meanest of the mean and the weakest of the weak. The happiness of the tough and the strong hereafter depends upon the happiness of the former. Defence of the interest of the weak should be the concern of the strong and the defence of the interest of the minority should be the concern of the majority. The weak and those in minority should work for convincing of the strong and those in majority that their interests will be in jeopardy if they forget the former. It is love's struggle to conquer through unbending will and self-sacrifice, the strong, the tough and the many in the larger interest of mankind.

It is this genuine democracy and genuine non-violence that can fill up the emptiness that is the result of the age of materialism falsely described as the age of science or technology. Suicide in Scandinavian countries is no evidence of a fuller life. Nowhere is emptiness more visible than in the world of students. It is one story of imbalance in social sphere. The reason is unfulfilled desire to be provided with a purpose for human existence.

Democracy and non-violence are the only recipe that can lead to a successful search for that purpose as they can lead to a successful fulfilment of it.

## G. Ramachandran

*observes that we should look upon democracy as the political expression of non-violence in government and equally accept non-violence as the deepest expression of human freedom.*

Words too are born, grow, mature and acquire different shades of meaning from time to time in response to circumstances and changing conditions. They can thus be living things. But sometimes the original meanings are half forgotten. Sometimes, also the inner significance of words changes. Democracy is an example of this. There are today many forms of democracies and the changing forms in turn affect even the content of democracy. Lincoln's famous phrase still remains classic, that democracy is "government of the people, by the people and for the people." If this is democracy, then the relation between non-violence and democracy becomes apparent at once. In a government of the people,

by the people and for the people, most forms of violence are ruled out and become un-needed. When a democratic government functions with reservations in regard to democracy, violence comes into the picture in the exact measure of such reservations. Where forms of violence persist in society and in government, to that extent there will be less of democracy. The reverse becomes equally true: that democracy is fuller to the extent that violence is absent. Where a government belongs to the people, and is run by the people and for the good of the people, we have a government by consent based on voluntary acceptance of the disciplines of citizenship. The need for violent sanctions in such a situation is reduced to the barest minimum. But where people do not rule themselves and for themselves, then government has to use violence to enforce disciplines and secure consent. Herein we see at a glance the relationship between non-violence and democracy.

We have had in history from ancient days the rule of the priest, then the rule of kings and warriors, then of the wealthy, and finally the increasing rule of the people. Democracy is thus a growth from ancient roots. It was a growth from within the realities of collective life. It became imperative and there was no escape from it for any people anywhere. Democracy thus developed like a force of nature itself, compulsive and inescapable. Its onward march even today grips every people in every part of the world. A study of the evolution of democracy will show unmistakably the progressive decrease of violent sanctions and their replacement by non-violent sanctions and specially the growth of the organized will of the people. The distance travelled by history to reach democracy from the rule of priests is the distance travelled by non-violence from violence in government and society. Under all the earlier forms of government the

power of organized violence was the ultimate sanction. With the advent of democracy, however, there came into existence legislatures and parliaments, where battles were fought not with swords but with knowledge and the spoken and written word. The pen became mightier than the sword. Discussions and debates became increasingly the instruments of democracy. Nothing was more powerful than the pressure of public opinion.

It may be argued that perfect democracy exists nowhere and that therefore the total absence of violence through the police and the army is not practical politics. This is true, but it does not affect the argument that the more truly democratic a government is the less will be the violence employed by it. We cannot have in human affairs the perfection of any concept of society and government. We can and must endeavour, however, to advance continually towards such perfection. That alone will be progress. Any such advance will always mean advance from violence to non-violence, from enforcement by the police and the army to voluntary obedience to laws and to sanctions through willing consent. The infallible test, therefore, is that a government is most democratic when it is most non-violent, i.e., when it depends on the willing consent of the people who accept responsibilities and perform duties without external compulsion. This is the meaning of the famous proposition that that government is the best which governs the least, i.e., governs without violence and compulsion. The meaning of the proposition is not that a government is best when it does not govern at all. That would be anarchy, and anarchy is at no time a substitute for democracy. It may seriously be doubted if anarchy is permissible even in God's Heaven !

Violence is a short-cut in implementation when various peaceful methods of educating and training the people fail.

Violence can sometimes get quick results and these results may even be apparently good. But non-violence represents the faith that good results can be secured through understanding, discussion and public debate. It is easy for us to see that when violence enters by the front door, democracy begins to be pushed out through the back door. Gandhi once said that democratic rights are God-given rights. We have heard a lot of the Divine rights of kings without our being able to trace any relationship between God and the kings. Democracy is the Divine right of the people. That is why we believe that the voice of the people is the voice of God. The question may be asked, since there are no perfect forms of democracy anywhere in the world today, if it is conceivable that there could be a government and a society functioning without the police and the army. It would be idle to think of a world society from which all evil is totally abolished. A world totally devoid of evil might well be a Utopia. Equally, a world overburdened with evil will be self-destructive. Our aim, therefore, should be to sterilize evil and keep it at the minimum. In such a consummation, the police and the army will only have strictly limited validity and simply a prophylactic purpose. We must, however, face the issue how best to control forms of evil in government and in society under a democracy. We will have to forge the non-violent sanctions of example, of public opinion and satyagraha. Evil must be brought under the pressure of these non-violent sanctions and not simply punished at the gallows. The process of correction must be redemptive and not punitive. It should be clear, however, that there will remain the possibility of some evil persisting in spite of all the educational and redemptive processes of democracy. If at this point, a fully democratic government employs limited powers of violent coercion subject to parliament, it is open to us to

accept this without too much demur. Such exercise of minimum violence under safeguards will be like the use of the surgeon's knife.

In a true democracy, however, the residual violence in the hands of the State should be constantly brought under the chastening and purifying expressions of the non-violent will of the people, like non-co-operation, boycott and satyagraha. In fact, a genuine democracy must train the people in developing non-violent sanctions. That there is the police or the army must not deter a democratic government from directly developing the *shanti sena* among the people. Building up the *shanti sena* among the people will be the surest guarantee of the democratic rights and duties of the people. It is a stupid dichotomy of politics to think that a *shanti sena* will become the enemy of a democratic government. On the contrary, even if during the long period of transition from armament to disarmament and from war to peace, governments keep armies and the police, it would be extremely worth while to build up among the people a solid and effective *shanti sena* or peace army. A *shanti sena* will inevitably strengthen unity and cohesion among the people, develop self-reliance and courage and make a nation impregnable in every sense of the word against attacks from without and from within. A dictatorship will never permit a *shanti sena* because such a *sena* will be capable of uprooting it. A true democracy, on the other hand, must look upon the *shanti sena* as the most valuable instrument of good government, disciplined society and peaceful and creative social change. A *shanti sena* will be the best guarantee against all acts of private, individual and group violence in society by furnishing a healthy alternative. The substance of a democracy is not to be found merely in its numerous externalities, like adult franchise, free elections,

representative parliaments and popular cabinets. All these are necessary but they will become worthless unless there is built up within a nation the climate and reality of the *shanti sena*. It was our habit to discard any communist society as undemocratic because of brutal repression and periodical purges and liquidations. Equally today, it is difficult to accept the democracy of the United States as genuine or real in the face of the people's growing faith in violence for the redress of all grievances and the cult of political assassination which breaks out again and again. It should be absolutely clear to thinking minds that even while a small measure of residuary violence may be left in the hands of a fully democratic State, such a State would perish without the vast bulk of the people operating the tools of non-violence for the redress of grievances and for effecting changes. In other words, the content of democracy must be impregnated with non-violence if democracy is to survive in the life of a nation and in the life of mankind. We must look upon democracy as the political expression of non-violence in government and equally accept non-violence as the deepest expression and tone of human freedom. Democracy and non-violence thus become complementary, strengthening and enriching each other as they travel together hand in hand through the pathways of the centuries. We must recognize this blood relationship between democracy and non-violence without in any way wasting time in controversies about Utopian concepts and practices concerning them. Democracy and non-violence must both be practical and within the reach of human attainments. In this crucial test lies the validity of this thesis.



## Morarji R. Desai

*discusses the relationship between democracy and non-violence in pointed relation to individual self-development.*

Democracy is based on the concept that all men are endowed with the capacity, latent though not actual, for personal betterment and higher individual self-development that fulfils life. They are endowed, individually, with equal rights of freedom, which they are entitled to use towards progressive realization of the fundamental Truth of human existence.

We are here concerned with the conception that every human being has, and must have, the right to develop to the fullest extent man is capable of doing—by bringing the powers latent in him into active play. If I consider that it is my right to do so, as everyone who argues considers, then I have got to accept the natural right of everybody else to do so. That

means there must be complete individual freedom for development. It means that everyone must have full freedom to think, to speak and to act according to his own conception.

This right of full freedom, or this liberty, is circumscribed by only one limitation, that is to say: 'I have no right to exercise my freedom in a manner which will come in the way of another man exercising his freedom. It stands to reason that if I do differently and if another will do likewise the result will be that the freedom of both will collapse.' But if it is duly recognized that self-development is in the interest of everybody, then this limitation of the concept of democratic freedom has to be accepted fully by everyone.

But how is this limitation to be made into working order ? That is where the principle of the rule of law comes in. That is why democracy is a rule of law. It is framed by all the people and with their consent. From this follows the different methods of democratic forms of government. But in the different democratic forms, there is an inherent harmony and unity which is the common principle of equal freedom of every citizen. Whatever may be the difference in the forms of government, the government has to be run by the people direct as they do in Switzerland, for instance, or by the people indirectly, through representatives elected by the people by free vote, as it is done in big, populous countries like India where the elections are held under adult franchise. These representatives, in their turn, will form the government.

It is a feature of the democratic system that the Government can be run only by a majority vote and not by consensus. If you want that the people or their representatives as a whole must agree to a decision of government, then no decision is feasible, no law is feasible, no action is feasible. It is, therefore, that the view of the majority must prevail; but, here again, it is necessary and important that the majority view

must take the minority view into full consideration and must accommodate the right of freedom of the minority to differ. Freedom being one and indivisible whole, its loss to any section will eventually bring about its loss to all the other sections of the people.

On this conception is based what is called parliamentary democracy, whether you call it presidential form of government or parliamentary form of democracy. In the case of the former, it is a government elected directly by the people; in the latter, the government is elected not specifically by the people direct but by the representatives of the legislature elected by them direct. Viewed basically, the principle is the same. But all this cannot be considered an ideal form of government which is ideally carried on. It is subject to drawbacks and limitations characteristic of imperfections of man. These imperfections can be got over only when every citizen is made capable, by proper education and practical disciplines, of exercising his right of vote without being amenable to influences of force or corruption, direct or indirect. Until every voter acquires the knowledge and the courage to elect his representative by a free vote, democracy cannot function, as it should function, perfectly.

The constant attempt of a democratic government, therefore, must be to give proper education to the people and also otherwise provide conditions which make all its citizens fearless. It is only in a democracy that fearlessness can be achieved. And this, really, must be the test: how far the government has succeeded in making every citizen fearless, from which flows—call it 'socialism' or by any other name—a form of society which supports and sustains the democratic way of life. We thus find that democracy and socialism, like the two sides of a shield, are interdependent—because a person can become fearless, viewed normally, only if he

is free from the fear of unemployment and want, free from social and political fear. There must be firm assurance of security of his economic, political and social life, in order that the citizen can acquire and possess the quality of fearlessness, which is itself a positive state of self-development. Of course it cannot be gainsaid that the citizen has to work hard, very hard indeed—each citizen working in the interest of all citizens—to create and maintain the conditions which are conducive to it.

Now non-violence is a concept which has come from the same philosophy. According to it all living beings proceed from God. There is nothing which does not come from Him. Therefore, because all things, all men, come from the one and only Creator, all are equal. When we all come from one and the same Source, we are a family. When you are of one and the same family, how are you going to harm or hurt any member of the family of which you are a limb? As you are an integral part of the family, you cannot hurt any member of it without harming yourself at the same time, whether you are conscious of it or not. You cannot benefit yourself at the cost of somebody else. This gives you the theory of non-violence, which has the support of the teaching of all sacred scriptures. It is a law of life.

But if this law of life is only for those who believe in this faith, it cannot work as a faith for people who have no such faith, or whose faith is wobbling. Therefore non-violence can be practised only by those who believe in it really and fully. As I said, it is necessary that everybody should be fearless, and that, in order to be fearless, there should be freedom from economic fear; there should be freedom from social fear; and there should be freedom from political fear.

There are a few people who do not require any external aid to be fearless. They are fearless in all conditions; neither

poverty nor social pressures, nor political pressures, will make these people give up their fearlessness. Nothing will make them desist from doing whatever is in their power to do in a given situation. But these people are only a few in number. Therefore when we argue that poverty is a great bar against human development, it is not wholly true. It is true only in the sense that the average citizen has not got this faith and he cannot therefore act up to it. And it is therefore important that conditions of economic fear, social fear and political fear should be removed effectively.

When we say this, the question arises: who is to do this? That is where government comes in, otherwise no government is necessary. A government is vital because man does not act correctly by himself in all cases; those who do are in microscopically small minority. A government is required to regulate those who are unruly. It is because of the presence of a government that many people remain within the bounds of law, observe the rules.

But if all people do not obey the law, then no law can function. It can lead to a state of affairs which brings in a dictatorship. The dictator will then begin to think: 'let me remove all these people by force'. So he jumps the rails and takes upon himself the government and begins to rule through terror. But it is the experience of ages that you cannot teach anybody by threat or by force. A dictatorship destroys the very basis of fearlessness which is fundamental for man's well-being and development. Even in the *Gita*, where the great qualities are described, it begins not with *satya* (truth), but with *abhaya* (freedom from fear). It does so presumably because on the pedestal of fearlessness it is that truth itself remains enthroned.

In a democracy, in order to secure one's own freedom, people agree that "I will not use violence to assert my right".

The power of coercion is handed over to the State for use if and where necessary, so as to ensure that other people's rights are not put in jeopardy by violence by anybody. Therefore a democratic government comes nearest to non-violence or to the non-violent concept. But the government is not, and cannot be expected to be, a non-violent entity, because the State itself is so conceived, and is so organized, as to be able to deal effectively with forces of diverse categories.

I do not believe that non-violence can ever be established for the whole society, because everybody will not believe in it. As we know, those who believe in it are very few; you will not find a majority believing in it at any time. In the matter of truth, nobody will say that he dislikes truth, or that truth is not right, and yet you will find that it is not possible to follow it strictly in practice. In the world you find the dualities existing side by side: reality and unreality. truth and untruth, violence and non-violence.

You cannot make the assertion, therefore, that violence is not in nature. But I believe very firmly that for a person who wants to achieve truth, violence cannot be a means, because violence inherently has always the danger of being pursued by untruth, as violence depends on anger, and anger is inseparable mostly from violence, and when anger comes truth is first sacrificed. If you want to live Truth, then without non-violence you cannot achieve it, because in non-violence there is no danger of having anger, there is no danger of hurting anybody, there is no danger of deceiving anybody. Non-violence reflects the greatest courage. Non-violence, therefore, is not feasible unless a man gives up all desires and attachments. From this point of view also, it is not possible that the whole society can become non-violent. And yet, even from the point of view of the preservation of society itself, non-violence has to be practised mostly in life.

One has to resort to law, but the coercion of law is practised only by the government, and not by an individual. Only a right of self-defence is granted. But there, too, the right of self-defence is confined just to defend and not to go beyond it. If those who run democratic government believe in non-violence, then progressively they will work in a manner where most of the people, by education, will become in actual life non-violent—not in complete purity, but mostly. And that is the highest to which society can reach.

## Dr. K. G. Saiyidain

*asks the question, "is democracy compatible with violence?"*

Some things seem so patently obvious, so self-evident that one is shocked to realize that the world does not share one's views. There are many intelligent, well informed persons, in position of power, who do not, for instance, realize that democracy and violence do not go together. Many of them may possibly recognize it in theory and use the idea to embellish their speeches and writings. But, as soon as they are confronted with a critical national or international situation as politicians, their 'recognition in principle' is forgotten and most of them are apt to become aggressive and insist uncompromisingly on what they regard unilaterally as their rights and are prepared to enforce them through the use of violence, if necessary. In the world in which we live today, it is desperately necessary to examine, with cool judgment and objectivity,



what the consequences of violence are and what they are likely to be if the present tendencies are allowed to go unchecked.

I should like to make what I consider to be a few brief and fairly simple propositions in this contribution.

1. Violence has never provided a just solution of national or international problems at any time and even if, by chance, the right solution has sometimes emerged from it, the use of violence has left behind in the situation elements which have continued to exercise an undesirable influence. The treaty of Versailles and the settlement with Germany at the end of the last War provide two of the numerous instances which show that violence did *not* provide a just solution of the issues involved. I recognize that wars, which represent one of the worst forms in which violence is let loose, may have some indirectly beneficial results like progress in science, technology, medicine, bringing (tainted) wealth to particular persons or group. But that is no justification for wars because that is a very unwise and wasteful way of securing these incidental advantages for most of which man can strive directly.

2. Violence in the past, too, was an evil but, in a world of poor communications, of people living in comparative seclusion from other peoples, its range was likely to be comparatively limited. So, it was possible to continue to exist, however precariously and insecurely, in a world where violence was not ruled out. Today, the whole pattern of the world has changed and, whatever good or evil happens in any part of it is bound to affect other parts of it sooner or later—sooner rather than later ! If war breaks out today, not only is the peace of the whole world threatened but the economies of countries are adversely affected and life becomes more and more difficult for the common man—except in so far as a tem-

porary spurt of prosperity may occur in some countries as a result of the armament industry and other industries related with it. But this is eventually at the expense of real, enduring prosperity. The world cannot afford to indulge in this kind of spectacularly destructive waste (nor can any country) without having to pay for it in course of time—payment which has unfortunately to be made by both the innocent and the guilty. As the Holy Koran puts it: “And beware of the catastrophe which, when it befalls, will not be limited to those who have specially transgressed (but will draw everyone into its train)”.

3. It may, however, be said that for many, many decades now, there has been a highly developed system of communications—both of men and things and ideas—and the world has in effect become one. And yet violence has been going on without precipitating a global crisis of destruction. This has been true till the recent past, although the price that the nations of the world have had to pay for it—in terms of the misery and suffering of hundreds of millions of human beings and the *thwarting of the promise of the gracious life* which the progress of science and technology seemed to hold out—is literally incalculable. In the literatures and histories of the world, there are heart-rending accounts of “what man has made of man” and in a book entitled “*Days of My Years*” which I read many, many years ago there are incredible stories of the atrocious cruelty perpetrated by man against his brother man in the last century and in the early years of this century. Now, however, since the last World War (or a little earlier), the enormous development of the nuclear power for destructive purposes as represented by atom and hydrogen bombs and their unholy progeny has completely altered the situation, so much so that I personally consider any complacency in this behalf as criminal and suicidal. It is now possible,

as everyone knows, to use the existing stockpile of nuclear bombs in U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. to 'over-kill' mankind ten times—unless, in the meanwhile, their capacity to over-kill has increased further! It is not even unlikely, experts agree, that some mad man in power may deliberately decide, as a matter of policy, to start a global holocaust. This can even occur as a result of some accidental mistake or neglect, as has actually happened on a small scale once, though the possible consequences were luckily checked in time. It would, therefore, be correct to say that, if violence was immoral, unethical and unfruitful in the past, today man has at his disposal these diabolical engines of destruction which, in the event of a major war breaking out—or *even* without it—can almost completely destroy human life on earth with all its finest achievements and cultural triumphs. The day Hiroshima was bombed has been described as a day 'that will live in infamy', although the bomb dropped there was almost a toy compared to what is possible today. If violence is not unanimously and vigorously checked and an atomic war breaks out, the day will not even 'live in infamy' because there may be no human memory left to record it.

4. Whatever I have said so far applies to all political systems, whether capitalist or socialist, whether democratic or totalitarian. No political system in the contemporary world can afford to play with violence with its predictable consequences and there are no greater fools than those who imagine that, while the rest of the world may be destroyed, they will somehow escape the nemesis! In the case of democracy, however, there is a special reason why it is inconsistent and irreconcilable with violence. Democracy is government by consent, by persuasion, by discussion, by the reconciliation of differences in a peaceful and civilized manner and by taking the views of the majority and the minorities into

due account. It does not, ideally speaking, equate right with might or hold that God is with the big battalions. After all, violence pitted against violence can only prove which side has more *power* at its disposal. It does not prove the validity of an argument or the justice of a cause. And yet it is strange that, almost throughout history, both in democratic or near-democratic countries (as in other political systems) success in organized violence has been made the arbiter of right and wrong. Both in international relations and in relations between groups in the same country what counts is the power of the army and armaments, of the police force or of vested interests and groups which can mobilize force and enforce their claims however reasonable or otherwise on 'the point of the bayonet'. Violence often becomes a shortcut to persuasion, irrespective of the rights of the case. This is so today, for instance, in 'peace-loving and democratic India', in France which gave the world the slogans of 'liberty, equality and fraternity', in the U.S.A. which claims to be the special guardian of democracy in the world, in the nascent democracies (and dictatorships) in Africa, in some of the socialist democracies—to say nothing of the racial dictatorships like South Africa, Portugal, Rhodesia, etc. In fact, there is no country in the world which has a clean record in the matter and there is less call for throwing stones than for honest self-examination and examination of their own policies by all the nations of the world—particularly, as I have said, by those who profess to believe in democracy. In domestic relationships violence has literally no place, because such countries have democratic constitutions in which due provision has been made for solving any disputes or conflicts that may arise—as, knowing human nature, it is inevitable that they should. That is why this rising surge of violence, which is darkening the domestic horizon in most countries of the world, is a grave threat to civilized life and entirely irrational.

It is no consolation to be told that these manifestations of violence are due to the patent injustices that exist in society and the world. One is, of course, only too conscious of these social and economical injustices but apart from the fact that they are *not* always due to these causes, violence is not at all likely to solve problems which require statesmanship and courage. So far as international relations and conflicts are concerned, the democracies need to re-shape their foreign policies wisely and intelligently so as to minimize conflict and maximize peaceful approaches to problems. They have at their disposal the agency of the United Nations, which, with all its imperfections—which are really the imperfections of the member States—offers the possibility of finding a way out of war and other situations of dangerous conflict. They cannot and should not take refuge behind the plea that they cannot do anything by themselves, unless other nations—in fact, the whole world—do likewise. This ‘ideal’ state of things has never been achieved and will never be achieved and unless some nations have the courage to take right decisions unilaterally, the world will not move towards more rational objectives or relationships. Gandhi objected to evil—of which violence is one of the worst forms—being allowed to become a part of our *means* and not only of our ends, because *means* tend to pervert ends. So violence, even if resorted to in the service of apparently good ends, is bound to defeat its purpose.

I have not here made a plea for avoiding violence always and under all circumstances. I can visualize situations when violent resistance to evil and injustice and denial of human freedom may be justified. I have, however, ventured to plead that, in the world of today, with its special explosive possibilities, violence is a dangerous, contagious, uncontrollable disease and in personal, group and national relations, there is a rational (and to my mind irrevocable) case for eschewing

it. I have further tried to stress the point that modern democracy is incompatible with violence and, whenever the latter gains the ascendant, all the values, the safeguards, the human freedoms cherished by democracy are likely to be trampled under foot.

## Dr. A. Appadorai

*discusses the disciplines necessary for democracy in India and outside.*

The recent unsavoury expressions of democratic politics in our country—floor-crossing, violent disobedience, unseemly behaviour in legislative bodies, the enormous increase in the number of Ministers to suit party interests—make the ordinary citizen inclined to ask the question, is this the democracy which has been described in political classics as the best form of government? A careful re-examination of the fundamentals of democracy with special reference to the disciplines it expects of the ordinary citizen and the legislator seems called for in order, first, to revive the waning faith in democracy and, second, to prepare ourselves better for the duties which democracy demands from us all, if democracy should promote, in Gandhi's words, *sarvodaya* or the welfare of all.

## THE POSTULATES OF DEMOCRACY

To start with let it be said clearly that democracy in modern times is based on the postulate that popular sovereignty can exist without popular government. For representative democracy, which we have, is a system under which the people exercise the governing power through representatives periodically elected by themselves. This means that a State may be termed a democratic State if it provides institutions for the free expression, and, in the best analysis, the supremacy of popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy. The business of government is highly complex especially in our technological age and where large populations are concerned; to expect the common man to participate directly in government is to court disaster.

The relevant question to ask at this stage is, what is the institutional mechanism by which the ultimate supremacy of popular will on basic questions is ensured? The equal rights of all normal adults to vote, and to stand as candidates for election, periodical elections, freedom of speech, publication and association provide the opportunities for political participation—for choosing the rulers and deciding the general lines of their policy. They enable those who are so minded to devote themselves to political problems as much as they please. Differences in the social environment, in economic resources and in natural endowments decide the extent to which these legal rights are effectively used; but even to those who are the least politically minded, they afford the opportunity to pass judgment freely and frequently on the work of the political engineers whose decisions affect their lives. Democracy is thus based on the principle that no man or group of men are, by themselves, good enough to determine the destinies of others. Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. When one group of men are found



wanting, they may be replaced by another group at the periodical elections. This ensures responsibility of the government to the people.

The right to political participation is thus at a minimum basis identical. But this democratic idea of political equality does not imply, as it has sometimes been wrongly interpreted to mean, "one man, one unit of influence". Neither in theory nor in practice is that idea true. Democratic theory has for long recognized the position that the aristocratic principle of the primacy of the few permeates every domain of life. Did not J. S. Mill say in forceful language: "One person with a belief is a social power equal to 99 who have only interests"? Again, "the instructed minority would in the actual counting count only for their members, but as a moral power they would count for much more, in virtue of their knowledge, and of the influence it would give them over the rest". In other words, the differences among men do make themselves felt in the discussion which precedes the voting. In fact, the central problem of democracy is how to ensure free play and effective fulfilment to the opinions of men of character and knowledge, so that they may counteract the forces of corruption and unreason. The emphasis on discussion as a cardinal tenet of democracy would lose its value if it did not implicitly recognize that men should be influenced by the wisdom of others and therefore one man's real influence is not equal to that of another.

Political participation of the people, with its concomitants, the supremacy of popular will on basic questions of social policy and the responsibility of the government to the people, is then the first postulate of democracy; the second is the method of peaceful persuasion. This, in fact, is what distinguishes democracy from dictatorship on the one hand and from mobocracy on the other. Democracy is based on the right of every man bound by decisions to contribute what-

ever it is in him to contribute to the making and remaking of those decisions. This demands that the general will is the basis of laws. But the ends which people think to be good differ from group to group, from individual to individual. How can we arrive at a consensus?

The democratic method provides a sensible way. Democracy is indeed defined by Bassett as a political method by which every citizen has the opportunity of participating through discussion in an attempt to reach voluntary agreement as to what shall be done for the good of the community as a whole. It resolves itself, in practice, into a continuous search for agreement through discussion and compromise, and action on the basis of the maximum measure of agreement available. Jawaharlal Nehru realized the importance of discussion and compromise when he wrote on August 25, 1954 to the Presidents of the Pradesh Congress Committees that the very essence of a democratic State was "its functioning in an atmosphere of peace. Problems, however difficult, are solved by peaceful methods, by discussion, negotiation, conciliation and persuasion".

The democratic method precludes arriving at a decision on social policy in the streets, which is the way of mobocracy.

Before we leave this topic, one other implication of the democratic method may be briefly touched on : majority rule. Since unanimity is not attainable, votes have to be taken and a majority must decide. But the principle of majority rule is a delicate balance of the rights of the minority and the rights of the majority. The minority has a right to influence the process of arriving at a decision by the free expression of its opinions and the right to have its wishes and interests taken into consideration. The majority has the obligation to respect those rights and to exercise its powers with moderation. The minorities acquiesce in the decision of the majority not only because they know 'they will have

their day', but because they feel that every effort has been made to understand and meet their point of view. Majority opinion in a democracy must be such that while the minority may not share it, they feel bound by conviction and not by fear to accept it, though only as a second best; and if democracy is real, the submission of the minority must be given ungrudgingly, remembering that the majorities also have rights. That requires a give and take, a balancing of interests, which is necessarily slow. Gradualness and tolerance are essentials of the democratic method of legislation. Changes to suit changing conditions must no doubt be made, but by agreement made after peaceful discussion and persuasion; it is also helpful to remember that where it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change.

A third postulate of democracy is an egalitarian society. Absolute equality in income is a mirage and democratic theory is not foolish enough to hold it up as an ideal. But equal opportunities are possible and the masses in democracy, who have political power, naturally use their power to achieve this practicable ideal. Egalitarianism, in the democratic context, means, as Gandhi wrote in his *Constructive Programme*, "the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other". Everyone must be assured a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, sufficient cloth with which to cover himself, facilities for the education of his children and adequate medical relief. The government is judged by the people democratic or not by the extent to which they make efforts through legislative and executive action to provide a welfare State.

## THE ORDINARY CITIZEN

The disciplines that democracy demands from the ordinary

zen follow from the three postulates we have indicated  
ve. If democracy means the supremacy of popular will  
basic questions of social direction and policy, it follows,  
night follows the day, that common good must be the aim  
social policy and the individual must use his vote—an  
expression of his political power—to promote common good.  
s appears such a commonplace that the reader may wonder  
y this is mentioned at all. Well, because often common-  
ces become smokescreens, under cover of which selfish  
erests are attended to. The Santhanam Committee Report  
Corruption would not have been necessary if a straight-  
ward appreciation of public interest were as common  
one would like to see.

In a remarkable little book entitled *Hindrances to Good  
Citizenship*, published in 1909, James Bryce highlighted pri-  
te self-interest among the three major defects of democracy  
practice, the other two being indolence and party spirit.  
ivate self-interest—the use of political power for private  
rposes—expresses itself in a variety of ways. Bribery is  
e most obvious. The passing of money, or the promise  
advantages such as a job for a relative, is always done  
secrecy, and hard to detect. A citizen who sells his vote  
polluting the spring of civic duty; he is not only performing  
s public duty badly, but, worse, becomes a tempting exam-  
e to others. It is not often realized that the giver of a bribe  
equally, perhaps more, guilty. As Sri Ramakrishna used to  
y the person who, by his careless behaviour, places temp-  
tions before a thief, is more responsible for the social  
ime of theft than the thief himself. So too of the giver  
bribe.

More involved cases than simple bribery, where private  
if-interest plays a part, are when candidates seek the vote  
the voter with promises of support to local public works.  
road or a dam is an avenue to more money for several

local people, including contractors, and the temptation to give one's vote, or to seek votes with such promises, is very great. Now *prima facie*, there is no private self-interest in this; but, it may be that the scarce public resources available are used to better common good if spent, say on water-works in a more needy locality, or for anti-malaria operations. The citizen who gives his vote has, in public interest, to weigh and balance the advantages of the use of public funds; it is a difficult choice but a necessary one if private self-interest were not to play a sub-conscious or insidious role in a citizen's exercise of his political power.

Yet another expression of private self-interest in the exercise of the vote is the influence caste plays in elections. When I am called upon to vote in elections, municipal, State or national, I must, if I am true to the first postulate of democracy, i.e., aiming at common good, vote for the candidate or/and party which in my judgment will work best for promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Indian observers of the elections, accustomed to weighing evidence carefully, write of the first general election thus: "Considerations of caste and community played an important part in the selection of candidates for almost all parties". "Caste, being an age-long institution rooted deep in the native soil, was bound to play an important role in elections. In Berar Patils were put up as candidates in predominantly Patil constituencies and Deshmukhs in predominantly Deshmukh constituencies." Foreign observers similarly note the important role caste played in elections. Selig Harrison notes that the political role of caste is widely conceded in the Indian Press, "and invariably the most perplexing election surprises become crystal clear when the caste factors in a constituency come to light". The only hopeful feature is that caste itself as a social institution is undergoing radical changes on ac-

count of the influence of Western education, the development of urban life and the increased mobility made possible by the facilities for transport now available. The net result of the changes is the gradual redemption of the voters from the fetters of caste. The redemption, to be sure, is only beginning; but indications are that it, clearly, has begun well and will, in course of time, become more and more complete.

We have, so far, spoken of the implications of the first postulate discussed earlier, i.e., aiming at the common good of the community. The second postulate we stated is the democratic method of discussion, compromise and the peaceful way of settling the inevitable differences of opinion in a community on what common good is. This imposes a great discipline on the citizen as to how he attempts to get his own conception of common good accepted by others. The agitation in several parts of India resulting in the burning of trains, buses and cars and the explosion of bombs is proof beyond doubt that the discipline which democracy demands from us is conspicuous by its absence among large sections of our people. We seem to forget the very basis of civil society—that obedience to law, except in very extreme cases as the medicine of the constitution, is essential for the maintenance of freedom. As Gandhi wrote in 1947: “if every individual took the law into his own hands there was no State, it became anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or State. That was the destruction of liberty.” Unmindful of the teaching of the Father of the Nation, civil disobedience is resorted to on every conceivable occasion. It is suggested when a new tax is proposed or the college fees are raised, even when trains run late.

Civil disobedience apart, new forms of coercion are making their appearance. ‘Gheraos’, threats of self-immolation, fasting, various forms of direct action in the form of defying

laws and courting imprisonment, and unlawful strikes are some of the coercive techniques which are now everyday affairs. The purposes for which such techniques are resorted to cover starting a steel mill at a particular place, seeking admission to an engineering college, linguistic readjustments between two States, and banning cow-slaughter. The *Indian Express* of September 1, 1967 reports that the Registrar of Allahabad University was "gheraoed" for about four hours by more than 100 students to press their demands regarding admission of students; the same paper in its issue of September 8 carries a report that more than 100 students of Delhi University "gheraoed" the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the University Academic and Executive Councils for over seven hours to press their demand that M.A. students who had secured less than 50 per cent marks be given M.A. Pass degrees (with retrospective effect from 1965). Let me state, as forcefully as I can, that democracy cannot function successfully unless we citizens bear in mind that the whole basis of democracy is a peaceful approach to the solution of all problems. A government may make mistakes; our government has made several. But the corrective is not a resort to direct action on the part of the citizens, but persuasion and the withdrawal of the confidence in the government at the earliest opportunity through the ballot-box. "True democracy or *swaraj* of the masses", wrote Gandhi in 1939, "can never come through untruthful and violent means for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*".<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Harijan*, May 27, 1939, p. 143

The last postulate we developed was an egalitarian society. In achieving this, the ordinary citizen's part is clear : he must work hard to increase the nation's wealth, and use his wealth, over and above what is required for personal consumption, as a trust for the welfare of those less fortunate than he. Here, as elsewhere, Gandhi is the safest guide to the nation. His famous theory of trusteeship is often dubbed impractical, but it contains an element of truth, viz., an acquisitive society in which everyone tries to grab more and more for satisfying his selfish pleasures is immoral. Conspicuous consumption is vulgar. Instead, to moderately use one's wealth and use a part of it for the welfare of those who contribute to the making of that wealth would contribute to one's own spiritual satisfaction and social harmony.

#### THE MEMBER OF A LEGISLATURE

The discipline that the member of a legislature has to have is related to his function. What is that function ?

It is often said that the legislature's primary function is to make laws; it is a half-truth. It is a well-known fact that the Bills are drafted by the executive government for the most part, and, while changes may in theory be made by the legislature and laws are formally passed by it, few changes are, under the system of party government, in fact made by the House, unless government accepts them. It is again said that the legislature represents the people's wishes and interests—again a half-truth. For while the broad programme of the party in power on the basis of which it is elected by the people may be said to have the consent of a sizable proportion of the electorate, it is stretching the language too far to say that the laws passed by the legislature have the consent of the people (unless of course the Referendum and the Initiative are resorted to). The members of the legislature have no opportunity to place before the electors the



details of a Bill, nor of course to have the latter's opinions on them.

The legislature's primary function, I suggest, is the integration and co-ordination of conflicting interests. I have said earlier that there are in the body politic, necessarily, several views of what is good for society. These are expressed at party meetings and in the legislature, and through discussions, the greatest common measure of agreement is arrived at and adopted in the shape of laws. Conflicting interests require compromise. Compromise results from argument and discussion. Through such argument and discussion, interests become articulate and are rationalized. The political function of representative legislative assemblies is not so much the passing of laws, though formally it is true, as popular education in the pros and cons of alternative methods of regulating social behaviour, and the co-ordination of conflicting interests and viewpoints. The representative must be a master in the art of compromise. "Parliaments and parliamentarians appear as integrating agencies through which the policy of the government and the claims of the various interest groups are expounded to the larger public with a view to discovering a suitable balance."

In this background, Edmund Burke's classic statement of the functions of a representative becomes intelligible. In his eloquent address to the electors of Bristol he made crystal clear the duty of a representative in relation to his electors: A constituency cannot possibly instruct their member in all matters that come up before the legislature; even if they could, instructions from the constituency to a member are immoral, for it would result in a situation in which determination precedes discussion and the sacrifice of the judgment and conviction of the representative in favour of those of others. A representative has, of course, no right to disregard the fundamental convictions of his constituency. He

is elected by a constituency to confer with representatives who come from other parts of the country as to what is best for the nation as a whole. He must be reasonably consistent in his view. Plainly he is not entitled to get elected as a Congressman and to vote soon after for the United Front. The electors are, therefore, entitled to a full knowledge of the political opinions and sentiments of the candidate, and not only entitled, but often bound to reject one who differs from themselves on the foundations of their political belief. But, the elected representative is not a delegate bound to vote according to the mandate of his constituents; he must use his instructed judgment on the questions which come up before the legislature.

In the background of this political analysis, the discipline demanded of a legislator by democracy may be grouped under two heads: towards his constituency, and towards the legislature as a whole.

The representative has a duty to understand what his constituents think on basic social questions; he must also educate them on what electors elsewhere in the country think on those questions. He is in a vantage position as a member of Parliament for he comes into contact with other representatives. It is true that long absence on account of parliamentary sessions and the distance which separates the capital from members' constituencies make it difficult for them to pay frequent visits to their constituencies; but such opportunities as there are by correspondence must be used to advantage. Such activity presupposes the provision for secretarial assistance to members of Parliament by government as is done, for instance, in the United States for members of Congress. In our present financial conditions this may be considered difficult, but the first steps in this direction may be thought of to provide that nexus between representatives and their constituencies that democracy demands.

But a member who simply bows to the opinions of his constituency is, I suggest, misunderstanding his function. He is, he must remember, in the position of a leader and a leader, while he must take every care to understand what his constituency thinks on particular questions, has also the supreme duty of telling them, if he differs from them, of what his instructed judgment tells him is right. To be all things to all men is easy but morally and politically wrong. When the Official Language Bill was under discussion in Parliament, the *Indian Express* reported on December 5, 1967 that some forty Congress members desired freedom of vote on the Bill as "some of these members feel that politically this Bill would go against them in their home States where the Jana Sangh and the Samyukta Socialist Party are exploiting the people's sentiment against English to discredit the Congress." If the members, in their conscience, were in favour of the Bill, the reason suggested for freedom of vote is, I suggest, against the discipline demanded by democracy.

The frequent defections from one party to another—in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Haryana and West Bengal in particular—have highlighted the question, is "crossing the floor" politically right? There appears to be only one answer to the question, viz., that it is wholly immoral. One of the main reasons for the Governor to recommend the imposition of President's rule in the State was the weakness of the Ministry consequent on frequent defections; one member was reported to have crossed the floor as many as four times. But a simple answer as the one given above is, I suggest, not satisfactory, as the problem bristles with difficulties. The right to vote with a party other than one's own is a veritable safeguard against party autocracy and the power of the party bosses; it is also a valuable safeguard to political minorities and groups within a party that their views and interests are taken into consideration before the final deci-

sion is taken—for decision makers know that unless the wishes and interests of these groups are taken into consideration they may vote against the majority within the party. What has brought defections into disrepute—and rightly—is that recent defections do not show a public purpose, but only a selfish desire of the defectors for power and position. This is clear enough from the fact that defections end in the leaders of the defectors being rewarded with ministerial and other positions. To compel the defectors by law to resign their seats in the legislature and seek re-election has been suggested as a remedy; the remedy, if adopted, will take away from defections their political value, as outlined earlier in this paragraph. The remedy lies rather in developing conventions by which no party will encourage this practice by offering questionable rewards. It is well that a Special Committee of Parliament is to go into the question and suggest appropriate remedies.

On the representatives' obligation to the legislature only two things need to be said here: he must jealously guard the decorum of the House, and he must study a subject well before he speaks. Elementary, but elementary things have to be said today when you see legislatures being turned into battle grounds, disobedience to the presiding officer a daily occurrence, and the Marshal's presence is occasionally required to evict an erring member. The whole country looks to Parliament to set a tone in decorum and behaviour; and the member must not be found wanting. On the need for study of public questions, it is sufficient to cite the great example of Gokhale whose speeches in the legislature are a model of precision and constructive thinking. Incidentally, how useful would it be if members specialized in particular subjects that come up before the House so that the sum total of study contributed to the business of the House would be most rewarding.

“Democracy, disciplined and enlightened”, as Gandhi said, “is the finest thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed”.<sup>2</sup>

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2. *Young India*, July 30, 1931, p. 199

## R. K. Khadilkar

*says that we should devise and develop non-violent sanctions for bringing about structural changes in our society within the framework of parliamentary democracy.*

The objective of the freedom struggle of India was not merely the political independence of the country from the yoke of British imperialism but also the establishment of a new social order based upon justice and equality. The leaders of our freedom movement visualized a casteless and classless society, free from exploitation and fear. Therefore the political independence of the country in 1947 was but a partial fulfilment of their dream. It only marked the beginning of the process of liberation of the Indian people. It was only a first step and not the last step of their arduous journey towards real freedom. What remained yet to be achieved was a great deal more basic and fundamental to the cause of progressive

maintenance of the independence of India and of the freedom, equality and progress of the people.

The freedom struggle in India has been unique in world history, for it was fought and won with the weapon of non-violence. The architect of this novel weapon, Mahatma Gandhi, held that it could be wielded not only by a subject people in their national liberation from foreign domination but by any people in any struggle against injustice, oppression or exploitation in any sphere—social, economic or political. He in fact employed this weapon in upholding the rights of plantation workers in Bihar, of mill workers in Ahmedabad and of peasants in Gujarat. Gandhi firmly believed that non-violence as a technique of social change was quite effective and capable of solving all problems facing mankind.

The real problem which we faced after the dawn of independence—and continue to face even today—is how to wield the technique of non-violence for eradicating economic and social exploitation and developing an egalitarian democracy ensuring freedom and security to the masses.

Significantly, the Constituent Assembly was constituted largely of leaders who represented the core of the national struggle, led by Gandhi. They forged a Constitution which not only reflected the deeper urges and aspirations of the masses, but which also recognized and enshrined certain principles which sum up the kind of society we envisaged to establish.

Under Jawaharlal Nehru's dynamic leadership, the country embarked upon a planned programme of industrial development and economic progress—within the framework of the Constitution. The programme leaned heavily, in step with the dominant modernist trend, on socialistic pattern of national reconstruction. And it stood for a casteless, classless, egalitarian society. Working under the three five year plans

we have, undoubtedly, made marked progress in several sectors of our national economy.

But, evidently, all this did not amount to much—in terms of the long-promised removal of poverty and want, of under-employment and unemployment. The gulf between the rich and the poor widened instead of being diminished. The causes may be many. But what is important to mark is the fact that the economic life of common people continues to be much the same as before. Nay, in many cases the position has deteriorated considerably. Frustration and discontent grip masses of people. It is no exaggeration to say that they smart under the lashes of a deep sense of being betrayed. And forces are not wanting in the country which seek to fully exploit the situation to their own particular advantage.

Jawaharlal Nehru held the reins of power uninterruptedly for nearly two decades. Much credit is due to his charismatic leadership for the successful working of democracy in India and for the attempt to bring about the promised socio-economic change within the framework of the parliamentary system. The foremost freedom-fighter of uncommon toughness, he also kept up the anti-imperialist tradition of vigilant opposition to all forms of colonialism. By virtue of his pre-eminent position, he was able to hold together a diversity of mutually opposing elements. But after his passing away, and in fact even from a few years prior to his death, fissiparous and disruptive elements began to assert themselves, and grew in number and influence. This is borne out by the unprecedented number of parties and groups which contested the last general elections. The number of coalition groups that stepped up and stepped down the saddle proves that the growing uncertainties of multi-party politics have become almost the order of the day. All this provides a veritable stumbling block in the way of economic development and social reconstruction by peaceful means.



People are getting restive. There is no lack of advocates of violent and insurrectionary methods for effecting the much delayed social changes. The question is whether the future course of the Indian Revolution will be peaceful or violent, democratic or totalitarian.

As the followers of Gandhi are wedded to non-violence, it is primarily their responsibility to evolve a national consensus from out of the present confusion. A feeling is growing among the common people that the followers of Gandhi have rather become the votaries of the status quo, instead of resisting the inequitable privileges of the owners of wealth or talents. There is also the suspicion that these followers of Gandhi feel helpless and are in fact afraid to challenge the prevailing 'order'. The impression in the people's minds is that they have lost their zeal and passion for reform or change and that in the name of non-violence they allow and tolerate and even turn a blind eye to many injustices and wrongs present in the existing 'order' of things.

In contrast, Gandhi was quick to rise up against any injustice, oppression or exploitation which he came across in society. He tried to find solutions to problems by applying non-violent means. He never shut his eyes to the wrongs or injustices perpetrated around him and would, as a true *satyagrahi*, consider it a sin if he did not take up promptly the cause of justice and truth. Gandhi's non-violence was not a docile but an intensely dynamic concept. Although he was not an armed revolutionary, neither was he an arm-chair visionary.

It is but natural for people to lament over the void created by the absence of Gandhi. Gandhi would not have remained a silent spectator, a passive witness, of the present-day conditions in India. The followers of Gandhi must forge non-violent weapons for building up a new social and economic

order. If they do not act today and allow things to remain as they are and if the people come to feel that the desired transformation of society cannot be brought about by non-violent means, they cannot be blamed for resorting to other methods of expropriating the expropriators.

The problem therefore crystallizes into a method of containing forces of change within the framework of parliamentary democracy and satisfying the urges of the people through non-violent procedures. It is no use interpreting non-violence from a personal point of view as a purely subjective or moral issue; nor would it serve any purpose to point out difficulties in its application. According to Gandhi, non-violence is a law of universal application and not meant merely for *rishis* and saints, but for the common people as well. With 'truth' as a fulcrum, non-violence is a powerful lever in the dynamics of society.

It is now for the followers of Gandhi to use the technique of non-violence for building up a social order founded on justice and freedom, so urgently needed in the context of the situation this nation faces today. The challenge before them, therefore, is to show that their faith in the revolutionary virtue of the Gandhi leadership is a living faith, which is capable of moving mountains.

This, of course, is not to minimize the immense problems which force themselves for early solution. In our country, with appalling poverty, economic inequalities, political uncertainties and social disabilities continuing to hold sway over almost all fields of life, the problems which we face are too many. Fissiparous tendencies, communal unrest, inter-party or inter-group tensions, regional, caste and linguistic prejudices sway the minds and actions of vast numbers of classes and masses alike.

In the face of all this, it is difficult indeed to work democracy

and representative institutions, to ensure individual freedom and egalitarian social aims. But with democracy and the representative institutions left in neglect, the prospect of a movement of change by peaceful means is far remote.

One of the hopeful situations which exist in India today is that all our leaders are more or less agreed on the democratic form of government and the need for achieving socioeconomic changes by the democratic process. But it should be ever borne in mind that change by democratic process is not in all cases change by legislative enactments. Change brought out by mere legislation is not sufficient and is hardly effective or healthy. It is more by education that healthy change can be made feasible.

To cite a tell-tale instance. The abolition of untouchability provided for in the Constitution through acts of legislatures has fallen far short of the mark. Legislative measures failed to provide the mental and moral education needed to bring about the change.

Thus a great responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the followers of Gandhi in bringing about structural changes in our society through peaceful and non-violent means. For this they will have to create a new urge, a new consciousness among the masses. They will have to stir people and galvanize them into concerted action. They will have to devise and develop non-violent sanctions to evolve a new social order free from exploitation and injustice. Above all, they will have to imbibe Gandhian values in their personal lives to become active instruments of a non-violent revolution. Their success or failure will determine the future course of India.

## Balraj Puri

*warns that a utopian concept of democracy can lead to totalitarianism and that direct action, even non-violent, has no place in a democracy.*

Without implying an affront to the distinguished participants in the discussion on democracy in the present volume, I cannot help recalling Bertrand de Jouvenel, who wrote in 1945 : “Discussion about democracy, argument for and against it, are intellectually worthless, because we do not know what we are talking about”.<sup>1</sup>

At this distance of time and space, the remark only sounds truer. For since then many new varieties of the so-called democracy—signified by adjectives like popular, basic, people’s, progressive, guided and so on—have emerged.

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1. Bertrand de Jouvenel : *Du pouvoir*, p. 338

However, despite fierce etymological controversies about democracy in the West, "everybody knows more or less what a democracy should be".<sup>2</sup> Also when the word is used in the communist world, everybody knows more or less what is meant by it.

But in countries like India, the confusion is really worse confounded. As if the semantic barrier between the West and the communist world was not forbidding enough, many political thinkers and leaders in India insist on claiming to add a third dimension to the conception of democracy. Adjectives like organized, radical, communitarian and participatory are supposed to be original Indian contributions to the debate or confusion on the subject.

Indeed, "we are living in the age of confused democracy—so confused that it is even difficult to determine what democracy is not".<sup>3</sup> And "unless these words—democracy and democratic—are clearly defined and their definitions agreed upon, people will live in an inexplicable confusion of ideas, much to the advantage of demagogues and despots" (Tocqueville).

Before proceeding further, it should therefore be necessary to state what I mean by the term. Avoiding etymological and historical controversies and platitudinous exercises in what democracy should be, I prefer to describe it as it works in practice. From this angle "the standard definition of democracy is : A multi-party system in which the majority which governs respects the rights of minorities".<sup>4</sup> Its chief merit is that it unambiguously differentiates democracy not only from communism but also from the non-communist utopia of a partyless polity.

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2. Giovanni Sartori : *Democratic Theory* (Indian Edition) p. 31

3. *Ibid*, p. 136

4. *Ibid*, p. 237

I am keen to highlight the challenge posed by the latter to the Indian democracy which has admirably withstood the threat from the extremes of the Right and the Left. For the vested interest and economic radicalism—the traditional saboteurs of democracy—are engaged in a titanic struggle in India, mainly within the constitutional arena. Neither the entry of Maharajas in politics nor the rise to the position of Chief Minister of a left communist has seriously deranged the course of democracy in the country.

It is possible to dub their recourse to constitutionalism as hypocritical and reserved. But an unhypocritical and unreserved call for withdrawal from constitutional struggle, by dubbing it as a scramble for power, damages the cause of democracy more surely. The halo of renunciation around the call only adds righteousness and hence further discounts reason.

Jayaprakash Narayan appealed to all “sensitive and less self-centered legislators, parliamentarians and administrators to leave their jobs and go to the people”.<sup>5</sup> His battle cry is “go to the Lok and not to the Lok Sabha”.<sup>6</sup> While a passive withdrawal from the constitutional system is an active way of subverting it, in a positive sense also “the *Bhoodan* movement challenges the system of constitutional democracy because it postulates a mass, direct action approach to political decision”.<sup>7</sup> Thus “if democracy is threatened from without by realists it is even more seriously threatened from within by perfectionists”.<sup>8</sup>

The intentions and ultimate objectives are significant in

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5. Jayaprakash Narayan : “Jivandan”, *Janata*, June 27, 1954

6. *Hindustan Times*, August 27, 1966, p, 5

7. Michael Brecher : Towards the Close of Nehru Era, *International Journal* (Canada), 1963, pp. 291-309

8. Giovanni Sartori: *op.cit.*, p. 51

psychology but far less in politics. Totalitarianism, after all, "was evolved into a pattern of coercion and centralization not because it rejected the value of eighteenth century liberal individualism but because it had originally a too perfectionist attitude towards them".<sup>9</sup> In rejecting democracy, "Marx did not suggest a counter ideal, but the same ideal in its most extreme, utopian and perfectionist form".<sup>10</sup>

Humanist—*sarvodaya*—school of Indian politics shares with Marx his distrust of constitutionalism, his utopianism and perfectionism and his ultimate objective of Stateless society through direct and participatory democracy.

But how does it propose to eliminate political parties and ensure full and direct participation of the people in the affairs of the State? There are only two possible ways: either coercion or voluntary complete unanimity; or dissolution of parties would pave the way for the dictatorship of any political minority, however small, which refuses to disorganize itself.

Consensus, consequently, is the corner-stone of the polity proposed by Jayaprakash Narayan. If elections disturb the consensus, they can be dispensed with. For "it is a static, abstract and narrow view of democracy" that holds "unless there is an electoral contest, there is no democracy".<sup>11</sup> But it again begs the question. How consensus would be automatically brought about?

It is claimed that conflict of interests and views would be rooted out in the new society. But a conflict-free society is the pre-condition and not a result of the proposed polity. Again, to create a new type of man and society in order to

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9. Talmon : *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*", p., 249

10. Giovanni Sartori : op. cit. p. 464

11. Jayaprakash Narayan: "Organized Democracy", *Studies in Indian Democracy*, p. 335

run a particular type of polity is to subordinate the content of democracy to its mechanics.

We have reasons to be wary of utopias that promise to eliminate all differences of interests and views. For even its pure and theoretical model is not terribly tempting, as it does not prize dissent, uniqueness of individual and rights of minorities. Marxists made the boldest attempt to translate such a utopia into practice. Cost apart, the attempt signally failed to eliminate differences between the same class or in the so-called classless societies. People, we should know by now, think not only through their stomachs but also their brains. Other experiments proposed in India to remove conflict of views, by altering property relations and human nature, may not fare better as long as man retains his faculty of thinking and is not denied means of expression.

"From a practical viewpoint, the question is not how to eliminate conflict, but rather how to manage and channelize it."<sup>12</sup>

The compulsion to conceive of people as a monolithic, homogeneous, singular entity arises from the need to satisfy a too literal definition of democracy. To retain the myth of popular sovereignty, people must participate face to face in all the affairs of the State. Real democracy, on the other hand, is not so much concerned with quantitative amount of popular participation but with the limitation, control and rotation of political power. For "the crucial interest is how power is exercised"<sup>13</sup> and not how it is derived.

"Power of the people, it must be noted, is simply an elliptical expression."<sup>14</sup> It can be used to overthrow democracies

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12. Myron Weiner : Political Parties and Panchayati Raj. Indian Journal of Public Administration, Volume IV, Oct.-Dec. 1963, pp. 623-8

13. Walter Lippman: *Public Opinion*, p. 312

14. Giovanni Sartori : op. cit. p. 24



and legitimize dictatorship unless certain safeguards are taken. These safeguards include a limit on the exercise of power and possibility of replacement of the regime, however popular, and respect for minority, however small. A little reflection would make it clear that these restrictions—essence of real democracy—in fact, ensure the perpetuation of the principle of popular sovereignty or power of the people. For thereby they retain their right to think and change.

To clinch the controversy: freedom not participation is the essence of democracy. "Participation in the exercise of power does not necessarily imply individual liberty."<sup>15</sup> All the people cannot participate at all levels of decision making. Nor should they be forced to do so. "The essence of Soviet democracy consists of participation in everything except basic decision making."<sup>16</sup> Totalitarian States of fascist type have secured even higher degree of popular participation. Even Greek city republics which are cited as model of popular participation were neither democratic nor free, as the terms are understood today. "The belief that in the ancient cities man enjoyed liberty is one of the strangest errors one could commit. He did not have the remotest idea of it."<sup>17</sup>

A more pertinent reason to reject the so-called participatory democracy is that conditions under which it is possible simply do not exist. The size of the republics today is larger than the ancient Greek city. The functions of the State have become too complex, numerous and big to be decided by show of hands of all the populace every day.

Moreover, "popular participation to have any sense must have avenues of sophisticated articulation. The multitude of viewpoints must be consolidated, through the parties and

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15. *Ibid*, p. 257

16. David Granick : *The Red Executive*, p. 196

17. Fustel de Coulanges : *La Cite Antique*, p. 269

associations, in a few broad categories. And final decisions would emerge through discussions and compromises between a manageable number of categories of opinion. Within each category and beyond all categories maximum possible freedom of expression and dissent must also be ensured".<sup>18</sup>

Thus in practice, the objectives of the "participatory democracy" can only be achieved through what is called a representative or constitutional democracy. Otherwise it might be popular participation but not democracy, and worse still, only an illusion of participation.

Having accepted the broad objective, mechanism and framework of a totalitarian system, Sarvodayites, Humanists and populist socialists of India still claim a non-totalitarian character of their utopias on the basis of their faith in non-violence.

*Absolute non-violence is not a necessary condition of democracy.* Every democracy is known to depend on some degree of violence for its external defence and internal security. But is violence a necessary condition of non-democracy? Its degree of dependence on violence, however, varies and would, for instance, be far less in 1984 than of Stalin's fifty years before that. For newer techniques of brain-washing and regimentation require less and less violence.

While I do not contest the claims of efficacy of non-violence that are often made, perhaps its potentialities are yet not sufficiently developed to sustain and stabilize a totalitarian regime. But when other ingredients of such a regime—distrust of constitutional processes, self-righteousness, elimination of parties and other checks and balances—are sanctified by a philosophy, would not some of its non-violent adherents, faced with the choice between collapse of the system

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18. Balraj Puri : *Humanist-Sarvodaya Challenge to Indian Democracy*, Conspectus III, 1966

and use of violence, consider the latter to be a lesser evil?

In any case, how can non-violent authors of the new polity stand surety for non-violent conduct of all its members for all time unless they get absolute power over it ?

It is readily conceded that other things remaining the same, non-violence is preferable to violence. But it is not their proportion in a system that can be an exclusive measure of its democratic character. Strength of democracy lies in the effectiveness of constitutional means to resolve issues. Direct action approach, on the other hand, substitutes a democratic process. Whether it is violent or non-violent is a further sub-division of this approach. The ease with which movements started by non-violent leaders often acquire violent expressions would illustrate that difference between a constitutional and a non-constitutional action is as important as that between a violent and a non-violent action.

In a democratic system, a majority has no need to resort to satyagraha and a minority is not right to use it to impose its will on the majority. Even a majority should not impose its will on a minority on matters of exclusive concern to the latter.

True, numbers are not an ideal measure of truth. But they do provide a tentative way of resolving an issue which in a democracy is further allowed to be debated. In any case violence is no better measure than reason and number for determining what is right and what is wrong. Non-violent direct actions which seek to supplement or supplant constitutional democratic processes, on the other hand, seek to replace reason and numbers by suffering and pity as a measure of rightness. It may be a better measure than violence but surely less democratic than constitutional means.

And to the extent, people, deficient in reason and number, compensate their deficiency with self-righteousness, spurred

by suffering, they become less innocuous. Even though their standard "may if anything affect actual behaviour (of Indian politics) in a morally adverse manner",<sup>19</sup> the utopians of India do not relent in their moral presumptuousness, which further undermines their democratic role.

However, those who value participation more than freedom, speed more than consent, and radicalism more than constitutionalism, are certainly entitled to reject democracy, partially or fully. Indeed, on the basis of a certain value system, a valid case can be made against democracy. But why do it in the name of democracy and confuse the issue?

Before passing a judgment on inadequacies of democracy, a distinction is worth drawing between the illusion and reality of participation, speed and radicalism. More often than not, dissipation of popular energy, through militant agitations on frivolous issues, exhausts the radical potential of a political movement and in reality helps in protecting and strengthening the status quo.

A perfectly pertinent question is: what if a system does not respond to reason and popular will? If a voice is not heard because it comes from the poor and the backward or a small number, if elections reflect not popular opinions but influence of money-bags or of the powers-that-be, if issues cannot be debated freely and if the individual is not secure, clearly the system cannot qualify to the title of democracy.

"In such a situation, there is no contradiction in the working of democracy which is the rule of law, and use of direct action which means defiance of law."<sup>20</sup> Thus direct actions are of two types—"those that enable us to give to the parliamentary

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19. W. H. Morris-Jones: *The Government and Politics of India*, p. 60

20. Y. B. Chavan: "Direct Action and Parliamentary Democracy", Harold Laski Institute of Political Science, Ahmedabad, p. 6.

form a greater democratic content and those that lead to its deterioration toward authoritarianism.”<sup>21</sup> This classification is no less relevant for our present purpose than that based on violence and non-violence.

As a radical and a revolutionary—who wants to transform all aspects of the society—I am for a vigorous movement, preferably non-violent, to democratize the Indian polity. While I hold that extra-constitutional and unconstitutional means, even non-violent, for getting a particular viewpoint prevailed, are not only not democratic but in the long run less effective, all impediments to democratic functioning should be resisted militantly and resolutely.

Popular energy would be better used in correcting the system that does not reflect popular opinion rather than in voicing dissatisfaction against individual acts of that system. Instead of quarrelling with the judgment of the referee, let us first struggle for evolving more fool proof rules of the game and criteria for the appointment of the referee. It is not merely a question of sportsmanship and rational behaviour. It is also a test of real radicalism.

Present rules of the game in India are admittedly unjust, posing enough task for the entire revolutionary potential of Indian politics. But, here too, non-violent struggle would lead to more effective and lasting results than violent struggles. Not only because a modern established State has usually superior means of violence than most social revolutionaries, unaided by foreign power. Also because non-violent means are in better harmony with the ends of the struggle. And side effects of violent struggle are often worse than the original disease it had sought to cure. Non-violent techniques, in

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21. Rajni Kothari : “Direct Action—A Pattern of Political Behaviour”, *Quest*, Jan.-March 1960

fact, require a more determined revolutionary zeal, deeper conviction and greater courage.

The final and finest expression of non-violent struggle, however, is through the constitutional forum. Those who insist on posing non-violence as an alternative to constitutionalism do violence to the spirit of non-violence. For when reason and consent are discounted, non-violence is reduced to mere coercion.

Real democracy, real revolution and real non-violence are, in reality, indispensable to one another.

# Gulzarilal Nanda

*discusses the need for non-violent substitutes for violent forms of action in democratic India.*

Democracy, as a system, is designed for peaceful adjustment to changing circumstances in the affairs of a nation. The pattern of power that emerges from democratic processes reflects the balance of forces prevailing at a particular time. In successive stages, changes in the social and economic life of the country find their expression in its political institutions, but democracy, as such, has not within itself the requisite capacity for ushering in timely changes in response to the call of social ideals or rising expectations. The democratic approach generates these expectations and broadens the horizons of the common man.

Vested interests can, however, manipulate the levers of democracy in order to remain entrenched in their positions

of advantage. Political ambitions openly exploit the inertia and other weaknesses within the social structure, thus creating new impediments in the way of necessary and desirable social changes. The recurring elections have, for example, infused a new strength into the rigidity of the caste system and heavily distorted the operations of the democratic system. These are factors which tend to accentuate conflicts and develop new tensions, against which democracy itself has not so far provided adequate built-in safeguards. The resulting social strife breeds occasions for recourse to violence and poses a serious threat to the stability and smooth working of democratic institutions.

It is a task of social engineering to provide non-violent substitutes for the forms of action which aim at bringing about forcible change in line with the social ideology and the newly emerging needs and aspirations. The democratic system, as it is working in our country now, has given evidence of poor elasticity and a certain incapacity in dealing with these new forces and pressures. The people's discontent is allowed to grow in volume and intensity and patch-work solutions at an advanced stage fail to avert outbursts.

The party system in a democracy provides encouragement for group discontent taking extreme forms and ending up in scenes of violence. Political parties are usually unable to resist the temptation to derive political advantage from such situations. The collective forces based on informed and sober public opinion are too feeble at present to exercise a strong and positive influence in giving a healthy direction to the course of events.

The administrative machinery of the State is vast and complex and is for the most part not sufficiently sensitive and responsive to the urges and aspirations and needs of the people. It rides rough shod over the masses of people not pos-



sessing influence or means and leaves them groaning in distress and despair. The 'rule of law' and the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution help to preserve the status quo, but the obligations of society and the State towards the weak and the under-developed have been relegated to the sphere of Directive Principles which do not give rise to any special concern.

This picture of society has place for all the elements which tend to thwart the impulses for economic and political changes which could give some shape of concrete reality to the accepted social ideals. Till some sort of equilibrium is established in the social and economic life in the country, in line with the wishes of the people, the ferments will grow and the forces for change are bound to assert themselves from time to time. They will easily run into violent courses unless they are harnessed and given a peaceful turn and direction.

Recurring, frequent violence and the spread of disorder must invariably undermine the whole structure of democracy and lead to the extinction of the freedom of the people. For the preservation of democracy and the stability and growth of democratic institutions some alternative course—a non-violent substitute—must be available to the people. This will not arise spontaneously. It can come out of immense effort. It will have to be developed and sustained by a team of dedicated leaders, a large band of devoted workers, and the enthusiastic support of millions of people in the country. There has to be continuous education of the people in non-violence and its application, and the philosophy of non-violent revolution must enter deeply into the consciousness of vast numbers in the land.

The people must be made aware of the great power which rests in their hands, which they can themselves use for transforming the whole social system. The prevailing discontent

and the new awakening will themselves become the means of generating the people's power. Channels have to be created for the organized expression of this energy, for the purpose of removing obstructions in the way of nation's progress and for waging a sustained war against the abuse and misuse of power in any form.

The direction for the application of the people's power should not be a matter of individuals or of limited choice. The people have to discover and develop a common mind and purpose over as large a field as possible regarding the situations, problems, issues and tasks before the nation. This consensus among the people will be arrived at by team deliberations, through a network of forums for various groups, and at many levels.<sup>1</sup>

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1. To an extent these tasks have been undertaken by the Navjeevan Sangh. A beginning has been made.

## Dr. Joan V. Bondurant

*distinguishes satyagraha from other forms of action without overt violence.*

Every leader who seeks to win a battle without violence and who presumes to precipitate a war against conventional attitudes and arrangements—however prejudiced they may be—would do well to probe the subtleties which distinguish satyagraha from other forms of action without overt violence. There are essential elements in Gandhian satyagraha which do not readily meet the eye. The readiness with which Gandhi's name is invoked and the self-satisfaction with which leaders of movements throughout the world make reference to Gandhian methods are not always backed by an understanding of either the subtleties or the basic principles of satyagraha. It is important to pose a question and to state a challenge to those who believe that they know how a Gandhian movement

is to be conducted. For non-violence alone is weak, non-co-operation in itself could lead to defeat, and civil disobedience without creative action may end in alienation. How, then, does satyagraha differ from other approaches? This question can be explored by contrasting satyagraha with concepts of passive resistance defined by the Indian word, duragraha.

Duragraha means prejudgment. Perhaps better than any other single word, it connotes the attributes of passive resistance. Duragraha may be said to be stubborn resistance in a cause, or wilfulness. The distinctions between duragraha and satyagraha as these words are used to designate concepts of direct social action are to be found in each of the major facets of such action.<sup>1</sup> Let us examine (1) the character of the objective for which the action is undertaken, (2) the process through which the objective is expected to be secured, and (3) the styles which characterize the respective approaches. Satyagraha and duragraha are compared below in each of these three aspects by considering their relative treatment of first, pressure and persuasion, and second, guilt and responsibility. Finally, we shall have a look at the meaning and limitations of symbolic violence.

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1. Satyagraha, as a word coined to describe the technique Gandhi first used in South Africa and continued to develop in India, is readily understood to mean the Gandhian method of conducting conflict without violence. The word satyagraha is a compound of two Sanskrit nouns: satya, "truth" (from sat, "being", with a suffix, ya) and agraha, "firm grasping" (a noun made from the verb agrah, which has the root grah, "seize, grasp", with the verbal prefix, a, "to, towards").

Duragraha is infrequently used in the sense of social action. The prefix dur (used in compound for dus) denotes "difficult". One meaning of duragraha is "bias". I am introducing the word here not only to enable the discussion at hand, but also to promote the refinement of language in describing techniques of social action. Many so-called satyagraha campaigns could more accurately be described as duragraha. The usefulness of the word in this context will become clear as the text progresses.

## I. PRESSURE AND PERSUASION

If non-co-operation, civil disobedience, fasting, and non-violent strike represent only partial—but never essential—expressions of satyagraha in action, this is because the Gandhian method goes well beyond the more simple and direct use of pressure. The objective of satyagraha is the constructive transforming of relationships in a manner which not only effects a change of policy but also assures the restructuring of the situation which led to conflict. This calls for a modification of attitudes and requires fulfilment of the significant needs of all parties originally in conflict. The fulfilling of needs is both an objective and a means for effecting fundamental change.

The immediate cause for action, both of a satyagrahic and duragrahic nature, is an allegedly unjust policy. The search for a solution to the conflict which results, once the policy and its proponents are opposed, is understood by the duragrahi in terms of applying pressure with skill and in sufficient strength to force the opponent to stand down. In satyagraha the search itself partakes of the objective, for it affords the stimulation and provides the satisfactions which attend all creative efforts. The dynamics of satyagraha are end-creating. The objective is, conceptually, only a starting point. The end cannot be predicted, and must necessarily be left open. As we shall see below, the process, as it relates ends to means, is complex.

In contrast, duragraha approaches the conflict with a set of prejudgments. The opponent is, *ipso facto*, wrong. The objective is to overcome the opponent and to destroy his position. The task the duragrahi sets himself is to demonstrate the fallacious or immoral character of the position held by the opponent, and to substitute for it a preconceived correct and

morally right position. A duragraha campaign has the often satisfying advantage of being direct and simple. The objective is given, and the end conclusive.

The uses of pressure are valued by both satyagrahi and duragrahi. Pressure, as the action of a force against some opposing force, has a place in both approaches. But in satyagraha this mechanical meaning of the term describes only the initial action in a complex system of dynamics. The satyagrahi develops an interacting force (with the opponent) which produces new movement and which may change the direction or even the content of the force. The opponent is engaged in a manner which will result in the transformation of relationships into a form or pattern which could not have been predicted with any precision. The subtleties of response from the opponent are channelled back into the satyagrahi's movement and these responding pressures are given the maximum opportunity to influence subsequent procedures, and even the content of the satyagrahi's claims and objectives. This process has been described elsewhere as the Gandhian dialectic.<sup>2</sup>

Pressure is understood in duragraha in the sense of steady pushing or thrusting to effect weight or burden, and usually it results in distress. Pressure in the mechanical sense is not developed further into a process reflecting influences from the opposition or, to be more exact, duragraha does not develop such a process through design. The strike is typical of the straightforward application of pressure. The strike is commonly used to effect economic pressure, and is intended to hurt business, or to strain relationship so that normal functions are brought to a halt, or at least inhibited. Normal functioning cannot be resumed until policy changes are instituted.

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2. Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Princeton, N. J., : Princeton University Press, 1958), Chapter VI

In the field of labour relations, sophisticated forms of collective bargaining represent an advanced technique of negotiation and compromise. Relationships do indeed change, but these changes are in degree, and only to the extent that degree can become so great as to represent kind do they reflect fundamental transformation. The process of strike or passive resistance, or *duragraha* in its most common forms, amounts to the intensification of pressure or the shifting of points of attack until a settlement is reached through capitulation or through compromise. The objective does not partake of a search, nor does it require an explicit intent to discover solutions which will satisfy the opponent. *Duragraha* seeks concessions; *satyagraha* sets out to develop alternatives which will satisfy antagonists on all sides.

Creativity is essential in *satyagraha*—not only in devising techniques adapted to given instances of conflict, but also as an inherent part of the philosophy which underlies *satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* may be likened to the thought process objectified. One can draw upon Dewey's analysis of purposive action to suggest the process in operation. *Satyagraha* on the field of action is reminiscent of the process of inquiry and solution of problems as described by Samuel Beer: "An enquiring mind comes to a problem with certain purposes, but in its contact with fact those purposes are modified and enriched. New traits in a situation may be perceived and that perception will modify the purposes which were brought to the situation. Thus creative solutions arise. In the continuum of inquiry, the inquirer's perspective is continually developed. The purposes and interests which he brings to inquiry guide him in his contacts with the facts. But what he learns about the facts in turn guides the development of his interests and purposes. If he is to learn, he must start from what he already knows. In that sense his approach to the facts

is limited and biased and he is 'blind' to many aspects of the facts. But we must not forget that he can learn and that in the course of learning his initial purposes may be greatly enlarged and deepened".<sup>3</sup>

Over against the harassment and distress commonly effected in duragraha is set the fundamentally supportive nature of satyagraha. As the satyagrahi moves to bring about change in the situation through persuading his opponent to modify or alter the position under attack, he seeks to strengthen interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal satisfactions through acts of support and, where appropriate, through service to the opponent. This approach goes well beyond the nebulous and often platitudinous insistence that all men are brothers and that love for the opponent dominates the feeling and dictates the action. It is based upon a psychologically sound understanding about suffering and the capacity of man to change.

The discovery that fundamental change is accompanied by suffering can be understood through a bit of self-introspection. The more rigid and fixed the attitude, or the more habitual the behaviour, the more painful the process of change. Persisting, obstinate attitudes are not without their cause. They perform a function which has its origin in personal history and they are part of an intrapersonal economy, any

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3. Quoted from Samuel Beer, *The City of Reason* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 42. Professor Beer develops "the philosophical ideas which support the theory of a free society", and a political theory derived from Whitehead's metaphysics "based on reason and directed toward liberty". The philosophy on which his form of ethics is based "emphasizes the relativity of all institutions...the gulf between the ideal and the actual is never bridged, although the duty of man is continually to try to bridge it."



disruption of which will be experienced as distress and even as a major personal threat. It follows from these elementary psychological facts that change can best be effected in the context of reassurance and through efforts to delimit the area of attack. It may, indeed, be impossible to bring about a change in attitudes and to achieve the transformation of relationships without extensive reassurance and support. Otherwise the conflict becomes exacerbated, the opposition hardened, and the prospects of a life-and-death struggle enhanced.

When the dispute is over a simple policy change which does not challenge long-standing custom or in which the emotional investment is low, then *duragraha* may well succeed. The undermining of the opponent may result in sufficient distress to bring about compromise and concession within tolerable limits of change. But when fundamental attitudes and long-established beliefs are challenged, the required change may be impossible to tolerate without considerable supportive effort. When change of such fundamental nature is involved, the harassment of a strike, demonstration, or other form of *duragrahic* attack will not achieve the response or perhaps will achieve it only through overwhelming the opponent and destroying the possibility of a sound, transformed relationship.

Some form of destruction is involved in all change. In *satyagraha* the more serious the expected change (and, therefore, the more radical the destruction of established patterns), the more essential it is to undertake counter and parallel constructive efforts of a high order.

The creative process of *satyagraha* is applied in a supportive style towards a restructured end. This integrative mode of approach does not depend upon ideal views of mankind, but, rather, it is based upon the knowledge of the psychological needs common to every man.

## II. GUILT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Wherever non-violent movements are undertaken in the interest of asserting or establishing human or civil or "inherent" rights, the atmosphere is ripe for the emergence of an attitude which threatens constructive solutions. Self-righteousness is an extension into the realm of personal ascription of the sounder quality of moral indignation. Self-righteousness attaches to the actions of some through a failure to examine personal motives or to appreciate its effect in the objective circumstance. But to others, self-righteousness follows upon an explicit use of the alleged, or assumed, guilt of others. For there are those who set out to disclose the guilt of others, and to use this disclosure as a technique in prosecuting their "non-violent" attacks. The purpose of this emphasis upon guilt and the manner in which guilt disclosure is intended to function is not always clear. It may be dictated by a consideration indirectly related to the given conflict, as for example, a commitment to an ideological position not germane to the conflict at hand. Among such commitments, perhaps the best known is the doctrine of class warfare.

The author has on occasion heard participants in phases of the American civil rights movement instructed to disrupt business in retail shops for the purpose not only of putting pressure upon shop-owners to integrate their work force, but also of harassing customers so that they will recognize their own guilt. The argument is that the ordinary American housewife goes about her business in the markets with a false sense of innocence. She must be brought to understand that she, too, is guilty of discrimination. It may be that the unconcerned third party is in this way forced to recognize a fault and, in recognizing guilt, he (or she) will join or at least tacitly support the demonstrators. Such an expectation is, on its face, some-

what unrealistic, but however the expectation is to be assessed, the procedure reveals a point of critical significance. When a group is enjoined to disclose guilt on the part of others, while at the same time they set about demonstrating their own guiltlessness, the mechanism suggests psychological projection, the true meaning of which is an unconscious sense of guilt in the demonstrators themselves. It may be guilt of prejudice against the middle class of which the American housewife is such an eminent representative. Or it may reflect unconscious guilt on the part of the demonstrator against the very persons upon whose behalf he is demonstrating. The symbolic meaning of such action is noted below (section III) in the discussion of symbolic violence. Whatever the objective, the interest in producing a sense of guilt through discomfitting others is destined to exacerbate the conflict. This may indeed be its intent, and certainly it might succeed, in uncomplicated situations where simple *duragraha* has some chance of success. But where extensive and fundamental change is desired, reliance upon this procedure will fail of any clear and constructive purpose. For guilt is a destructive force and is closely related to fear and hatred.

The central point of criticism of the active use of guilt is not that the self-righteous demonstrator may himself harbour guilt, but, rather, that he is evidently unaware of his own guilt. The freely informed and acutely aware individual does not point the finger of shame at others. He sets about his task in quite different ways. And in recognizing his own prejudices—wherever they may lie—he engages with his opponents, as well as with his companions, in the struggle in order to search for constructive solutions and to transform relationships. Gandhi repeatedly warned of the dangers involved in focussing upon the misdeeds of the opponent. “After all”, he observed, “no one is wicked by nature...and if others are wicked, are we

the less so ? That attitude is inherent in satyagraha".<sup>4</sup> Earlier, Gandhi had written, "Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself, I have also erred",<sup>5</sup> and again, in opposing the use of sitting *dharma*, he explained : "We must refrain from crying 'shame, shame' to anybody, we must not use any coercion to persuade other people to adopt our way. We must guarantee to them the same freedom we claim for ourselves."<sup>6</sup>

Among the most constant and abiding efforts of the satyagrahi is the extension of areas of rationality. He recognizes the significance of the irrational, but, in contrast to the duragrahi, the satyagrahi seeks to minimize and not to use the irrational.

The relationship to those one seeks to change calls for a high level of responsibility. It is incumbent upon the satyagrahi actively to concern himself with the problems he is presenting to his opponent. His recognition of the burden his demands place upon his opponent is prerequisite to action. He is expecting his opponent to renounce or reject patterns of behaviour to which he has long been accustomed—and oftentimes behaviour which appears not only justified to the opponent, but which may also seem to him to accord with high moral standards. If conventional social forms are involved which carry sanctions for failure to comply (as in the law or established custom), the demonstrator, by his act of contravention, is presenting to the opponent and to third parties, formally not involved in the conflict, the necessity to make a choice. This choice may well require an act of faith on the part of the opponent. For the demonstrator is stating a position contrary

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4. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mohatma Gandhi : Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. V, 1938-40 (8 vols. Bombay : Jhaveri and Tendulkar, 1952), p. 328

5. *Young India*, June 7, 1920

6. *Ibid.*, February 9, 1921

to hitherto accepted form and usage. He is saying, in effect, "The established conventions and authorities are wrong; what I am doing is right; accept my way". In acting upon this assertion, the demonstrator is calling for the opponent to have faith in the demonstrator's judgment. A well-launched demonstration is calculated to confront the opponent in such a manner that he is forced to make a choice. Opponents and otherwise uninvolved onlookers are faced with the need to examine their own behaviour. Conduct which was formerly taken for granted is in this way questioned. If the opponent and the onlooker persist in the old way, the behaviour which was formerly habitual and automatic now is consciously taken, and for that very reason it is likely to gain the strength of conviction.

The responsibility for forcing a choice requires to be seriously weighed. Question should be raised about one's justification in asking the opponent to trust this judgment which is alien and unwelcome. When responsibility of this order is carefully studied, the need for supportive activity to the opponent can be more clearly understood. The details of support and the manner in which it may be undertaken can best emerge in the course of examining the extent of this responsibility within the context of a given conflict situation. When conscious decision is forced upon others, it becomes all the more important that guilt be dispelled, fear abated, and passions controlled. The forcing of new choices is a tactic for effecting change in a static situation. At the critical juncture when choice is forced, the satyagrahi must shoulder his greatest burdens. He will be confronted by persons seized with doubts and uncertainties and it is his obligation to tolerate their abuse, should it be offered, and to find ways in which to strengthen and reassure his opponents. His own strength at such junctures is put to the greatest test, and his own capacity for

creative thought and imaginative act is taxed to the fullest.

As the satyagrahi engages his opponent in constructive conflict, his responsibility is to be understood also in terms of responsiveness. The open-ended nature of his objectives and the transforming function of the process require that he extend to his opponent not only the respect implied by humanistic values, but also a measure of trust which goes well beyond that tolerated by proponents of duragraha. It is of the essence of satyagraha that every response from the opponent be accepted as genuine and that all undertakings of the opponent be considered to have been given in good faith. In satyagraha this is not only a matter of strategy, based upon an active search for truth, but it is also an effective tactic. If the opponent gives any indication of changing his position and altering his behaviour—in either direction—this indication must be given full recognition. It is essential to accept as genuine threats of violence or acts of hostility as well as any expression of intent on the part of the opponent to move towards a resolution of the conflict. To demonstrate acceptance and belief in the opponent's good faith will serve to hold the opponent to his word, to diminish his hesitation, and to encourage the realization of his perhaps shaky intent. It is a basic principle of satyagraha to consider as genuine all counter-suggestions.

The proponent of duragraha is characteristically conditioned to doubt every move made by his opponent, and to suppose that his opponent is acting in bad faith. The opponent must be actively opposed, his every act suspected. This readiness to doubt the good faith of an opponent may be put forward as a piece of sophistication, based upon experience or knowledge of human nature. In operation such an approach is poor strategy and worse tactics. The satyagrahi's move to credit the opponent with genuine intent requires the capacity to tolerate abuse (as in instances where the opponent has, in

fact, acted in bad faith) and to exercise forbearance. Gandhi once said that "impatience is a phase of violence".<sup>7</sup> In *duragraha*, efforts on the part of the opponent are oftentimes flaunted because they may upset the timetable of planned demonstration and result in inconvenience to the demonstrators. At such times the opponent is especially likely to be suspect. The manner in which the *duragrahi* readily places demonstration at the top of his priorities, even at the cost of resolving the immediate conflict, is illustrated by many of the student demonstrations organized in support of the civil rights movement in the United States. The author witnessed one such demonstration in a university city. A civil rights group, largely made up of students, challenged merchants to include non-white employees in proportion to the city's non-white population. After serious consideration the merchants did, in fact, take steps towards the integration of their employees and moved through the city's welfare commission to set up a training programme for potential employees from the minority group. Nevertheless, demonstrations and picketing were launched. When asked why they persisted in demonstrating even though the merchants had taken steps toward the desired objective, the leader of the demonstrators replied that the merchants had not acted in good faith, that their proposals were empty promises, and their hiring of a few Negroes amounted only to "tokenism". In this instance there was considerable evidence that the merchants had, indeed, acted in good faith. To announce that the opponent was not acting in good faith could result only in bitterness and further conflict. One of the results in this case was the alienation of many townspeople who had initially supported the movement and who were potential supporters of all civil rights efforts.

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7. *Ibid.*, October 18, 1927

The demonstration in question illustrates these two characteristics of *duragraha*—failure to accept the opponent's moves as being taken in good faith, and taking action according to the convenience of the demonstrators. The timing of this demonstration had been scheduled for Christmas week. Students had a holiday during these days and were free to demonstrate and picket. An even more important consideration was the business loss merchants would incur through interference with Christmas shopping. Paralleling these considerations was the suspicion that the merchants would do anything to prevent disruption of business during this most profitable season. The allegation that the merchants were acting in bad faith was conditioned by and to some extent arose out of this suspicion.

In the incident cited above, the demonstrators were of the opinion that they were using Gandhian tactics. Any familiarity with Gandhian *satyagraha* would have precluded this misjudgment. Indians will remember well the occasions upon which Gandhi refrained from taking action against opponents when inconvenience to the opponent was evident. He would not allow a movement aimed directly at Englishmen to continue during Easter Sunday, and, out of respect for his opponent's susceptibility to tropical heat, he would call off action during the hottest hours of the day. It would have been in the Gandhian spirit had these student demonstrators (1) taken the merchants' proposals as a genuine indication of their intention, (2) explained to the merchants that, even though their demands had not been met in full, they would withdraw their pickets during the important Christmas week so that business would not be unduly hurt, and (3) turned their efforts into solving the problems of organizing a training programme to provide skilled workers from the non-white community.



### III. THE LIMITS OF SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

Those who lead movements aimed at effecting change have a choice of means, and in the storehouse of strategies symbolic violence ranks high in popularity. There is no denying that all forms of violence have some chance of success in securing immediate, well-defined objectives. Symbolic violence, as a form of violence, and *duragraha* as a form of symbolic violence share this potential for success. We have seen above how *satyagraha*, as contrasted to *duragraha*, has superior potential in situations of conflict in which fundamental changes of attitude and behaviour constitute the objective. A concluding word may be said about the nature of *duragraha* as symbolic violence and the limitations inherent in its use.

“Symbolic” pertains to something that denotes or stands for something else. The distinction should be made between, on the one hand, that which stands for something else because it has been given consciously a conventional or contrived significance and, on the other hand, that which represents an unconscious wish (in this case, to be violent), a counter-desire (in this case, to be non-violent), or both at once. Those who consciously set out with violent intent and destructive objective to prosecute their action through means which are not physically violent may be said to engage in symbolic violence in the first sense—their non-violent acts have the contrived significance of violence once-removed. Those who, on the other hand, are attached to the ideals of non-violence, while at the same time they unwittingly engage in destructive acts, may be involved in symbolic violence described in the second (psychoanalytic) meaning of “symbolic”.

The individual who uses symbolic violence but who believes that he is using no violence may be unaware of the substitute nature of his behaviour which, in its unconscious meaning,

is violent and destructive. The behaviour of those who consciously contrive to use symbolic violence, as well as those who believe their actions to be free from violence, may both be substitutive in nature. The manner in which the guilt of others is used to promote a "non-violent" movement, as illustrated above (in section II), can be better understood by applying this second meaning of "symbolic".

The destructive effects of violence are widely recognized, and it is readily conceded that these effects extend beyond the physical. Violence once-removed, through unconscious symbolization, and acted upon in ways which exclude the cruder physical forms of destruction may indeed be more treacherous than frank and open violence.

The use of a symbol, if the results are to be understood (to say nothing of controlled), requires a high degree of awareness. Those who consciously set out to apply symbolic violence have a better chance of control and effectiveness than those who proceed with forms of *duragraha* without the recognition that they are involved in violence once-removed. It is for this reason that the leader who would organize a movement without violence should be pressed to understand his techniques and to explore his strategies.

Wherever men meet to consider how they shall struggle against great odds for freedoms or for cherished rights, the name of Gandhi readily comes to their lips, and his image of greatness and success strengthens their will. Let them know the distinctions between Gandhian *satyagraha*, and forms of struggle which are here described as *duragraha*. For without this understanding, the seminal contribution of Gandhi could be lost.

For those who do understand the many ways in which *satyagraha* is distinguished, a challenge is posed : the methods must be refined and techniques developed for this age of

advanced technology. The Gandhian philosophy of conflict is sound. Who is to press forward the experiments in technique? The first step is to reject the falsity and failure which is inherent in duragraha. New strategies for the constructive conduct of conflict, building upon and advancing beyond satyagraha, can be designed, and techniques to implement them await invention. In the face of unparalleled risk, there are few challenges which present such scope for creativity, and perhaps none holds out so much promise.

## J. B. Kripalani

*sets out the case for civil disobedience in a democracy.*

There has been a good deal of discussion in public and the press about the place of civil disobedience, satyagraha, in a democracy. That this weapon should not be used in India any more against a government put in power democratically by the popular vote has been the contention of some intellectuals and leaders. They hold that civil disobedience against a democratically elected government is neither right nor proper nor legally or constitutionally justified. It will, therefore, be worth while to study Gandhi's views on the subject. After all, it was he who conceived the idea and developed the technique of this non-violent method of fighting injustice and redressing wrongs.

Gandhi has never once, in his copious writings on the subject, said that civil disobedience cannot be resorted to

against a democratically formed government. It would be strange if he had. Gandhi never believed that the majority opinion must always be right. He assigned the supreme place to the individual conscience. But he did not consider it infallible. He therefore put on it the restraint of non-violence. If individuals and groups do not use violence, or coercion, and are prepared willingly to suffer the legal and other consequences of breaking the law, they are entitled to do so for what they consider to be right. But who is to decide what is right? Here is Gandhi's cryptic answer :

Questioner : 'However honestly a man may strive in his search for truth, his notion of truth may be different from that of others. Who then is to determine the truth?'

Gandhi : 'The individual himself.'

Questioner : 'But honest striving after truth is different in every case.'

Gandhi : 'That is why the non-violence part of it.'

Gandhi was conscious of the fact that any system of government, foreign or indigenous, democratic or totalitarian, may go wrong. He knew that even under democratic forms a government may be autocratic, that is, it may be highly centralized or corrupt. In such cases it would trample on the individual's liberty and freedom. Under such circumstances, Gandhi proclaimed the supremacy of the individual conscience, provided that the individual was willing to suffer the consequences of bearing witness to the truth in him. Gandhi also held that it is thus that the world has progressed. He says: "When Daniel disregarded the Laws of the Medes and Persians which offended his conscience and meekly suffered the punishment for his disobedience, he offered satyagraha. Socrates would not refrain from preaching what he knew to be the truth and bravely suffered death. Daniel and Socrates are regarded as having been model citizens of the States to which they

belonged." Further Gandhi considered satyagraha as a pure and sure weapon. He says, "I believe that the use of a pure weapon even from a mistaken motive does not fail to produce some good". Also, that "to put down civil resistance is to imprison the conscience".

Can civil disobedience be offered against a democratic government? The answer would be in the negative if no occasion could ever arise for a democratic government to offend an individual's conscience or to be corrupt. This would manifestly be unhistorical and not true to the facts of life. However, Gandhi's answer is clear. He says: "I hold non-co-operation is of universal use. Well applied, its use in politics can displace the use of barbarous weapons of mutual destruction. The thing, therefore, to be done is not to restrict its use but to extend it. The risk of misuse has undoubtedly to be run." But then Gandhi held that "no big or swift movement can be carried on without bold risks and life will not be worth living if it is not attended with large risks." When, therefore, occasion demanded he did not hesitate to take grave risks for himself and for the nation he led and guided. His whole life was full of risks.

Gandhi however says that in a well-ordered State the occasions for civil resistance would be rare. He says: "It is rarely that the occasion for civil resistance rises in a well-ordered State. But when it does, it becomes a duty that cannot be shirked by one who counts his honour, i.e., his conscience, above everything."

Unfortunately today there are all manner of democracies in various stages of development and under-development. A government may be installed in power by the free popular vote, but it may take steps to entrench itself in power permanently. Even if it retains the paraphernalia of the vote and periodical elections, it may be totalitarian in character. We have the

examples of the Nazi and communist regimes. Gandhi, therefore, does not talk of democracy but, what is more unambiguous, of a well-ordered State; and here, too, he holds that civil disobedience may become a duty for a conscientious citizen.

To further clarify his point Gandhi says: "I wish I could persuade everybody that civil resistance is the inherent right of of a citizen. He does not give it up without ceasing to be a man." The word 'citizen' in this context is significant. Only in a democracy is a man a citizen. In a totalitarian regime there are no citizens but only subjects and slaves.

Gandhi goes so far as to say that civil disobedience is the birthright of the citizen. He holds: "It is possible to question the wisdom of applying civil disobedience in respect of a particular act or law; it is possible to advise delay and caution. But the right itself cannot be allowed to be questioned. It is a birthright that cannot be surrendered without surrender of one's self-respect."

Gandhi further holds: "Civil disobedience becomes a sacred duty when the State becomes lawless or, which is the same thing, corrupt; and a citizen who barter with such a State shares its corruption and lawlessness."

Again Gandhi says: "Civil disobedience can be made a sovereign remedy for all our ills if we can produce the necessary atmosphere for it. For individuals there is always that atmosphere, except when their civil disobedience leads to bloodshed. . . . Even so a call may come which one dare not neglect, cost what it may. When the neglect of the call means a denial of God, civil disobedience becomes a peremptory duty."

"When a government goes wrong to the extent of hurting the national fibre itself, it becomes the right of the subject, indeed it is his duty, to withdraw his obedience to the extent it may be required in order to bend the government to the national will."

Gandhi held that no tyranny in the world could carry on without the active or passive co-operation of its victims. If they are brave and fearless enough to withstand the demands of tyranny and withdraw their co-operation, tyranny would collapse. He therefore held that the remedy lay with the oppressed. Thus the movement of satyagraha, as conceived by him, was one of self-purification. He held that all reform must begin with oneself. He says: "You assist an administration most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees. An evil administration never deserves such allegiance. A good man will therefore resist an evil system or administration with his whole soul. . . . Civil disobedience is the only and the most successful remedy and is obligatory upon him who would dissociate himself from evil."

Gandhi was most careful in using words. He not only talks of a bad system of government but also of a bad administration. A good system of government may become evil because of bad and corrupt administration. Even democracy may be badly administered. The present controversies in India among different political parties do not centre on the democratic ideal, which all accept, but on how the system is being administered.

Gandhi further held that satyagraha, to be genuine, may be offered against one's wife or one's children, against rulers, against fellow citizens, even against the world. Such a universal force necessarily makes no distinction between kinsmen and strangers, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe. No exception is made here of a government come into being democratically. In Gandhi's view any individual, group or government may go wrong and, then, the sovereign remedy is civil disobedience and not coercion or violence.

When Gandhi enunciated his concept of the trusteeship of the rich, it was pointed out to him that it implied the exis-



tence of law courts, which in the last resort could compel fulfilment of the terms of the trust. Where, he was asked, was this court of justice in his trusteeship of the rich and the capitalists. His reply was that there was none, except civil disobedience. It was civil disobedience which would compel compliance with the terms of the trust.

It is often said that civil disobedience is not constitutional. Gandhi's emphatic view was that civil disobedience is not unconstitutional. Inasmuch as the person or persons who offer civil disobedience are non-violent and are willing to pay the penalty of disobedience they are acting constitutionally.

A constitution, if it is really democratic, cannot deny to the individual the right to act according to his conscience, provided that he does so non-violently, without violating the rights of fellow citizens, and is willing to bear the consequences of his disobedience.

Gandhi goes further and holds that civil disobedience is not an illegal activity. It is not the violation of the law but the fulfilment of a higher law. Socrates violated the law inasmuch as he refused to refrain from preaching to the young and arguing with them. He again violated the law when he refused to pay the fine for what he considered a lawful activity. He refused to accept the judgment of constituted authority so far as his guilt was concerned. But he did not refuse to bear the consequences of his disobedience though it meant his drinking the cup of poison. He was the first satyagrahi known to history. He was opposing the newly constituted democracy of Athens, after the Tyranny of the Thirty.

Was Socrates a law-abiding or a law-breaking citizen? He himself answers the question in *Crito*.

His friend, *Crito*, advised secret flight from jail before the cup of poison was administered. To him Socrates replies :

“Consider the matter this way. Imagine that I am about to play truant....and the laws and the government come and interrogate me: ‘Tell us, Socrates’, they say, ‘What are you about ? Are you not going by an act of yours to overturn us—the laws and the whole State—as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a State can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and trampled upon by individuals?’ What will be our answer, Crito, to these and the like words ?....Shall we reply, ‘Yes, but the State has injured us and given an unjust sentence’?...

“ ‘And was that our agreement with you?’ the law would answer; ‘or were you to abide by the sentence of the State ?’ And if I were to express my astonishment at their words, the law would probably add: ‘Answer, Socrates....Tell us... what complaint have you to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the State? In the first place, did we not bring you into existence ?....Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us....who after birth regulate the nurture and education of children, in which you also were trained?....Well, then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave?... And if this is true you are not on equal terms with us; nor can you think that you have a right to... destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies...’ What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly or do they not?” To this Crito replies in the affirmative.

Further Socrates points out to Crito that the laws would argue that by remaining in the city for seventy years and not leaving it and having experience of the manner in which justice is administered in the State he has entered into an implied contract that he will do as they command him. “ ‘Moreover, you might in the course of the trial, if you had liked, have

fixed the penalty at banishment; the State which refuses to let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile. . . . And now you have forgotten these fine sentiments and pay no respect to us, the laws, of whom you are the destroyer. . . . You, Socrates, are breaking the covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure. In your old age you will not be ashamed to violate the most sacred laws from a miserable desire of a little more life. Listen then to us and not to Crito.' ”

Socrates concludes: “This, dear Crito, is the voice which I seem to have been hearing in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic. I know that anything more you may say will be in vain. . . . Leave me then to fulfil the will of God and to follow whither He leads.”

This, in brief, is the position that Socrates takes. He breaks the law and yet says he is the slave of the laws. All the benefits he and his children had enjoyed have been under the protection of the laws. He also admits that between him and the laws there is an implied contract of subordination and not of equality by virtue of his continued residence in the city and accepting its benefits. Is there not a clear contradiction between the two positions enunciated by Socrates, of disobeying the law and being subservient to it? Socrates seems to find no contradiction. It is only an apparent contradiction. In fact when Socrates seems to break the law he thinks that in reality he is not breaking the law, because he does so under three limitations: (1) he obeys a higher law, that of his conscience, which a good constitution must respect even though it may be obliged to punish violation of the law; (2) the law is broken non-violently; and (3) the violator is prepared to pay the full penalty of violation willingly and cheerfully.

Socrates in his defence, in the *Apology*, shows that he is a good and patriotic citizen of the State. He says: “Men of

Athens, I honour and love you best. I shall obey God rather than you and while I have life I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy." He also recounts the services he has faithfully rendered to the State, and on several occasions at the peril of his life. He is a good citizen who not only obeys the laws but respects his fellow citizens. Such a one, even while breaking a law, is in reality not breaking the law, but fulfilling it in a higher and nobler sense.

In Crito, the laws do not take Socrates to task for violating them when he refused to obey his judges and refrain from preaching to the young. Again they, the laws, do not blame him for refusing to pay the fine imposed upon him. They would blame him only if he followed the advice of his friend, Crito, and escaped from jail. The first two cases of disobedience are civil, because for them he is willing to pay the penalty imposed by the lawful authority. Leaving the jail surreptitiously would be criminal disobedience, because he would not be prepared to suffer willingly the penalty attached to absconding. If he were he would leave the jail openly and in daylight. Nay, if not seen he would invite the attention of the jail warders to his act of leaving their custody. If he did this there would be no point in absconding for he will not be allowed to do so but will get the added punishment for trying to abscond, which is against the law. That was not what Crito had advised. He had advised deceiving the authorities and gaining freedom. That is not civil but criminal disobedience. As such it will injure the laws and the State.

The same point is made clear in the life of Christ. When the authorities of the temple accused him of breaking the Jewish laws he declared that he had come 'not to destroy but to fulfil the law'. He could say this even when he was violating any number of laws and conventions prescribed by the heads of the Jewish religion. Jesus, it seems, saw no contradiction

in his mission in fulfilling the law and breaking many of the prescribed laws of his religion. Sometimes the law in its spirit and essence can be fulfilled only when its external regulations are violated. The law is thus transcended. It can be transcended when its scope is extended to bring out its essence more effectively. This was possible not by adhering to the letter of the law but by violating it. 'The letter killeth but the spirit saveth.'

In modern times Thoreau, Emerson and Tolstoy have advocated civil disobedience to vindicate the right of the individual conscience. Thoreau in his *Essay on Civil Disobedience* says: "Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think we should be men first, and subjects afterwards. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for law, so much as for the right. . . . It is truly enough said, that a corporation has no conscience." Further he says: "All men recognize the right of a citizen to refuse obedience to and to resist the Government when its tyranny and inefficiency are great and unendurable."

One of Thoreau's sayings has become a classic: "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison."

However, Thoreau, Emerson and Tolstoy thought generally of the right of individuals to civil disobedience. The latter two had no occasion, as Thoreau had, of putting their theory into practice. Thoreau also had occasion to offer civil resistance only once in his life. Gandhi contemplated not only individual but collective civil disobedience for the redress of political, social and economic wrongs. He organized in his lifetime many collective movements in pursuance of his technique of civil disobedience. In the process he systematized it. Let us then see what Gandhi had to say about civil disobe-

dience or satyagraha, as he called it.

On this aspect of breaking the laws, Gandhi says : "Civil disobedience presupposes a scrupulous observance of all laws which do not hurt the moral sense.... Thoughtless disobedience means disruption of the State. The first thing, therefore, for those who aspire after civil disobedience is to learn the art of willingly obeying the State laws, whether they like them or not. Civil disobedience is not a state of lawlessness, but presupposes a law-abiding spirit, combined with self-restraint.

"Only when a citizen has disciplined himself in the art of voluntary obedience to the State laws is he justified on rare occasions deliberately but non-violently to disobey them and expose himself to the penalty of the breach.

"I have found that it is our first duty to render voluntary obedience to law, but whilst doing that duty I have also seen that when law fosters untruth, it becomes a duty to disobey it. We can do so by never swerving from truth and suffering the consequences of our disobedience.

"The use of civil disobedience will be healthy, necessary and effective only if we otherwise conform to the laws of all growth. Civil disobedience is a beautiful variant to signify growth; it is not discordance, which spells death.

"Before one can be fit for the practice of civil disobedience, one must have rendered a willing and respectful obedience to the State laws. A satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously, that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of the civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances.

“A satyagrahi is nothing if not instinctively law-abiding and it is his law-abiding nature which exacts from him implicit obedience to the highest law, that is, the voice of his conscience. Every law gives the subject an opportunity to obey the primary sanction or the secondary, and I venture to suggest that the satyagrahi by inviting secondary sanction obeys the law. He does not act like the ordinary offender, who not only commits a breach of the laws of the land, whether good or bad, but wishes to avoid the consequences of that breach.”

Gandhi's view is emphatic that when one obeys the laws and is a loyal citizen and yet on occasion breaks the law because it is against his conscience and is prepared to pay the penalty provided for the breach of law willingly, he is not breaking the law.

Again Gandhi says: “It is only when people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the State that they acquire the right of civil disobedience.”

Daniel and Socrates are regarded as model citizens of the States to which they belonged, Prahlada a model son, Mirabai a model wife. They fulfilled the law though apparently breaking it.

As a matter of fact there has never been a reformer or a prophet who has not broken laws as they existed or as prescribed by the ruling authority, be it political, social or religious. Law-making was never, as it is today, the exclusive function of the State. As a matter of fact that was its least function. Its chief function was to see that the immemorial laws or those that were customary or made by religious and social heads or organizations were observed. The political authority was further to inflict appropriate penalties for non-observance of laws not always made by itself. When a religious law or convention was broken, the priesthood decided the case and handed the sinner or the criminal (there was no distinction

then) to the political authority. This was done in the case of Christ. The authorities of the temple adjudged Christ to be guilty and awarded him the punishment of death on the cross. The Roman governor only carried out the punishment. While carrying it out, he washed his hands clean of punishing a man in whom he saw no evil. The State in ancient times rarely made laws. The sanctions attached to the laws that existed or were made by associations, other than the State, were no less stringent than those attached to laws made by the political authority or the State. Often psychologically they were more stringent and compelling. All such laws, and those that in later days were made by the State, were broken by reformers, prophets and pioneers. The progress of society has depended, so to say, upon those who did not hesitate to break the existing laws, whether religious, social or political. Only so could a higher law be evolved. Generally these law-breakers have been good, peaceful and patriotic citizens, as were Socrates, Jesus and Gandhi and a host of others known and unknown to history. They all broke the law to fulfil the law.

In our recent struggle to evolve a more just social order, we had to break many social and religious laws and conventions, having reference to untouchability, caste, inter-dining, foreign travel, etc. For all these violations the pioneer had to suffer social obloquy and ostracism. These are more stringent punishments than jail-going. They often involve the members of the family of the offending individual. All our modern religious, social and political reformers, such as Swami Dayanand, Keshab Chandra Sen, Gandhi, and all the other leaders and followers in the national struggle were law-breakers of one sort or the other. They all had to suffer, and some of them paid for their disobedience with their lives. Even scientific innovators have had to bear the cross for the advancement of knowledge. Those who have through the



ages broken old conventions, whether in literature or art, had also to pay their price. In fact, without disobedience to existing laws and conventions there can be no advance in any sphere of life. Yet all this is not criminal but civil disobedience. It is not anti-social, but rather it helps to organize society on firmer foundations and higher levels.

In what I have written I have made three points clear: (1) the law of the conscience is supreme; (2) civil disobedience can be offered, whatever the nature of the State, whether autocratic or democratic; and (3) civil disobedience is constitutional action and, though apparently violating the law, is really the fulfilment of the law.

I have discussed in this limited space only these aspects of civil disobedience. I have not discussed whether a particular movement of civil disobedience in the present is justified or not and whether it adheres to the conditions laid down by Gandhi—namely, adherence to truth and non-violence, readiness to bear the consequences willingly, humble submission to the law, etc. I have also not discussed whether in India today there is the necessary atmosphere for launching a movement of civil disobedience in any particular area against specific or general grievances. Whatever the atmosphere and the circumstances, individuals cannot escape the obligation of bearing witness to the truth that is in them and suffering the consequences.

## Mohan Murari

*expounds the role of satyagraha in laying the foundations of democracy on a surer and sounder basis.*

Our country is the largest democracy in the world. It has withstood many a stress and strain to which it came to be subject for the past two decades or more. It still continues to function within its constitutional framework, while in many other countries, both of the East and the West, democracy has failed and fallen yielding place to dictatorship, naked or disguised. But all this should not delude us into false self-complacency and blind us to the serious dangers that threaten it. Frequent eruptions of mass violence in the shape of communal riots, labour and student strikes, increasing manifestation of divisive and disruptive forces, growth of private "senas", unhealthy exhibition of regional and linguistic rivalries and animosities, ungraceful rowdyism indulged in the legislatures by several members, disgusting spirit of faction-

alism and manoeuvrings for power, dissensions and defections motivated in many cases by undisguised greed are some of the unmistakable symptoms of the malady in our democratic system. Added to these are the serious economic problems of grinding mass poverty, widespread unemployment and glaring disparities, which have so far defied solution and tend to undermine the strength and stability of democracy in the country.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the demand for the revision of our Constitution has been recently growing. Suggestions are being made to replace the federal form of the government by the unitary one, and to substitute the parliamentary system by the presidential one. Similarly many other remedial proposals such as penalizing defections, banning communal parties, etc., are put forward. All these suggestions and proposals deserve calm consideration, but we should not forget that evil does not lie so much with our Constitution as with those who work it. We are here reminded of the wise words of Dr. Ambedkar, the leading architect of our Constitution: "I feel that it (the Indian Constitution) is workable, it is flexible, and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time, and in war time. Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that man was vile". The roots of democracy lie in the hearts and minds of the people, and these have to be watered and strengthened there. It is not so much the perfectness of the Constitution that imparts strength and stability to a democratic order as the devotion, loyalty and support which it receives from the people.

The strength and stability of a democratic structure depend on the awakening of the people to an adequate sense of their rights and obligations, on what Vinoba calls 'Lok-Shakti'. Of *swaraj*, Gandhi wrote as far back as 1925: "Real *swaraj*

will not come by the acquisition of authority but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be attained by educating the masses to the sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority".<sup>1</sup> The acquisition of this capacity to resist abuse of power and authority in every case is the key to the vitalization and maintenance of democracy or *swaraj*. This task is even more arduous and exacting than that of winning *swaraj* itself.

True democracy, or the *swaraj* of the masses, can never come except through truthful and non-violent means. But the non-violence that we shall require for the battle of democracy will have to be of truer, stronger and superior stuff to that we had adopted in our struggle for national independence which was the non-violence of the weak. As Gandhi realized to his great disappointment in 1948: "What I had mistaken for ahimsa was not ahimsa, but passive resistance of the weak which can never be called 'ahimsa' even in the remotest sense".<sup>2</sup>

The term 'satyagraha' is to be correctly grasped, for no Gandhian concept is more distorted than this. In the popular view, it has come to be identified with every type of direct action against the government. In 1933, Gandhi observed: "The word 'satyagraha' is often loosely used and is made to cover 'veiled violence'".<sup>3</sup> Again in November 1947, he regretted: "It is the fashion nowadays to use the word satyagraha for any kind of resistance, armed or otherwise. This looseness harms the community and degrades satyagraha".

Matters have gone worse after his death in the post-indepen-

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1. *Young India*, 29-1-1925

2. *Harijan*, 11-1-1948

3. *Harijan*, 15-4-1933

dence period. As Dr. Usha Mehta observes: "Mahatma's is a name that is much maligned and satyagraha a word much profaned in today's India. Most un-Gandhian and unethical acts are done in the name of Gandhi, and fasts and strikes, morchas and demonstrations, movements relying on sheer coercion and undisguised violence like 'bandhs' and 'gheraos' supported in the sacred name of satyagraha".<sup>4</sup> The cobweb of misconception and confusion surrounding it has, therefore, to be cleared.

Satyagraha literally means "holding on to Truth" and, therefore, 'Truth force'. It is also called 'love-force or soul-force'. It implies "a relentless search for Truth and a determination to reach it".<sup>5</sup> Truth does not connote any particular dogma or creed. It is a relative concept. "What appears to be 'Truth' to the one may appear to be an error to the other". Everyone is to pursue 'Truth' according to one's own lights. But the invariable condition is the strict adherence to 'non-violence' in thought, word and deed, "without ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth".<sup>6</sup>

Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of "harmlessness", but means "infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering".<sup>7</sup> So satyagraha implies the 'pursuit of Truth through non-violence'. Truth and non-violence are its two inseparable cardinal principles, "the integral parts of the organic whole". Satyagraha is to be followed in every walk and sphere of life. Thus it is a positive principle, a value and a way of life. Adherence to Truth naturally implies and includes an opposition and resistance to untruth and injustice. It rules out any submission to or compromise with evil in any

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4. *The Politics of Mass Violence in India*, p. 82

5. *Young India*, March 19, 1925

6. *From Yervada Mandir*, 1945, pp. 7-9

7. *Harijan*, 24-2-1940

form or measure. But this resistance is to be expressed in terms of non-violence, i.e., in the spirit of love. In it, distinction is made between evil and the evil-doer. The greatest opposition to evil is to be combined with the greatest love for the evil-doer, who is not to be hated and humbled, but to be sympathized with and to be weaned away from evil through love. In short, satyagraha is also a method of non-violent resistance to evil, in which we seek "to conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering".<sup>8</sup> It is conceived as a weapon of the strong and not of the weak and coward. Satyagraha as a weapon of non-violent resistance is thus a part of satyagraha as a way of life.

It is now easy to see the two-fold confusion about the popular notion of satyagraha. In the first place, it mistakes a part for the whole when it restricts it only to a method of resistance or direct action. Satyagraha, in the words of Gandhi, "is like a banyan tree with innumerable branches. Civil disobedience (a form of resistance) is one such branch".<sup>9</sup> Secondly, the popular view makes no distinction between satyagraha—a weapon of pure non-violence—and 'duragraha' in which there is "an insistence on or 'agrah' for either a wrong end or for a right end by wrongful and morally objectionable means or both".<sup>10</sup> Satyagraha differs from duragraha as the North Pole from the South Pole.

Satyagraha, understood both as a way of life and a method of non-violent resistance in the right sense of the term, would serve as life-blood of democracy. It would energize and strengthen the system and place it on a sound and unshakable basis in three ways:

Firstly, it would infuse and intensify the burning love for

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8. *Young India*, 3-11-1927

9. *Young India*, May 1, 1919

10. Dr. Usha Mehta : *The Politics of Mass Violence in India*, p. 82

individual freedom in the hearts of the people. Individual freedom is the soul of democracy and satyagraha is the gospel of freedom. It propagates a positive view and gives a sound basis to the concept of individual liberty. Pursuit of Truth according to one's own light presupposes even the right of every individual to err. Search after Truth is impossible in an atmosphere of bondage. Since this pursuit is to be made through non-violence, there is no danger in it of liberty sinking into licence. The freedom to pursue one's own conception of Truth is the very basis and purpose of human life. It is an inherent right that can never be surrendered without ceasing to be a human being. To lose it is to degrade one's self to the level of brute existence. Hence no price is too great, no sacrifice too heavy for preserving it. It has to be maintained and safeguarded even at the cost of one's life. The people, thus inspired by the philosophy of satyagraha, would never allow any encroachment being made upon their liberty and would be ever ready to defend it even with their blood.

Secondly, satyagraha is an education in creative and courageous citizenship. Satyagraha calls for strict self-discipline. Gandhi has prescribed eleven-fold vows for the votary of satyagraha. They are: truth, non-violence, *brahmacharya*, control of the palate, fearlessness, non-stealing, bread-labour, equal regard for all religions, removal of untouchability and *swadeshi*. Satyagraha, adopted as a way of life, means the cultivation and practice of these virtues which, taken as a whole, constitute the core of democratic citizenship. A person seeking to follow the path of truth and non-violence would cultivate within himself an enquiring mind, a scientific temper, love for justice, equal regard for the feelings and interests of others as for those of his own. He would have to shed the spirit of blind dogmatism and fanaticism, and snobbery. Practice of truth and non-violence is impossible for a man given to self-

indulgence and dominated by cowardice. So self-control and fearlessness are essential for a votary of non-violence.

So also such a person would lead a life of productive labour and would not live on the toils of others. This is what the vows of bread-labour and non-stealing imply. He has also to realize the truth that all wealth is social product and it has, therefore, to be held only as a 'trust' to be used with a full sense of social responsibility.

Besides, the spirit of non-violence fosters the sense of unity-in-diversity and banishes narrow-mindedness and all feelings of hatred and ill-will based on the differences of caste, creed and colour. It is an antidote to communalism, casteism and regionalism, which are eating into the vitals of the nation. In short, the spirit of satyagraha is the spirit of ideal citizenship, and "if it becomes universal, it would revolutionize social ideals and do away with despotisms". The proper cultivation and wide diffusion of this spirit will make democracy purer, stronger and more invulnerable.

And lastly, it places in the hands of the people a force—the weapon of non-violent resistance, "which is to violence—to all tyranny, all injustice—what light is to darkness".<sup>11</sup> The people, steeped in creative citizenship and fired by the spirit of individual freedom, can employ this force effectively in fighting anti-democratic forces. As Gandhi declared : "every worthy object can be achieved by the use of satyagraha. It is the highest, infallible means, the greatest force. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral".<sup>12</sup> In a country where the people are armed with the spirit and knowledge of satyagraha, their rulers would think thrice before they dare to abuse their authority.

The proper use of satyagraha will never work harm to demo-

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11. *Young India*, 3-11-1927

12. *Harijan*, 20-7-1947



cracy. Those who hold that it is out of place in a democratic set-up, confuse satyagraha with what we have called 'dura-graha'. The judicious use of satyagraha would always add to the health and strength of democracy.

Speaking of the Western democracies, which he described as 'nominally democratic', Gandhi once remarked: "If they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent." Similarly, if we want to turn our present-day democracy into a strong democracy of real substance, there is no better way to do it than to follow the way of satyagraha with faith and patience. To achieve success, two things are needed. First, to develop satyagraha as a science. The techniques of satyagraha have now to be re-studied and further developed through proper research. Second, bands of persons who want to dedicate their lives to re-building our democracy on a surer and sounder basis should be properly trained and equipped with the knowledge and techniques of satyagraha required for the great mission.

## Dr. V. V. Giri

*advocates non-violent approach to the development of harmonious labour-management relations in industry.*

At this crucial phase of her heroic battle against the four national foes—poverty, ignorance, disease, unemployment—for a developing country like ours, wedded to democratic socialism, the crying need of the hour is a ceaseless and united effort, peaceful and purposeful activity. This is the path shown by Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. We, who have been the fortunate inheritors of the priceless legacy of non-violent political Revolution bequeathed by Gandhi, have to keep alight the flame of Truth, equality, justice and fairplay in every walk of life.

To Gandhi, political independence was an instrument of achieving socio-economic freedom in the real sense of the

term. Gandhi rightly insisted that the social power should be completely bereft of violence and domination. He, therefore, integrated politics with the ethical and spiritual values which alone can render the foundations of democratic edifice sound, sturdy and stable. The political conflicts, if any, have to be resolved through non-violence.

Gandhi touched nothing which he did not adorn. With him social life was an integrated whole and practically every part of it received his alchemic touch and carried the impress of his dynamic personality. In every field of social endeavour in which he operated, the quintessence of his effort lay in a kind of humanism which had, paradoxically, in it a divine content. With such a unique personality harmonious relations between capital and labour constituted an article of moral faith.

As one who has worked for the labour in the past for nearly five decades, and who continues to be interested in the healthy progress of labour, I firmly believe that unless the workers realize their responsibilities and obligations, and have trade unions working as efficiently as the administration in the industry, they would not be able to achieve salutary results. Cordial and harmonious labour-management relations are vitally essential for fortifying the bastions of industrial peace, for smooth and steady economic progress and social transformation. The technological conditions of modern industry, the economic imperatives of the current era, and the political and social implications of a democratic way of life—all these factors postulate the inevitability of industrial peace and democracy. They also make us aware of the dangerous consequences of strained relations in the industry in the shape of strikes and strifes, 'gheraos' and 'lock-outs'. It may be worth while recounting the following observation which mirrors Gandhi's prophetic insight into human relations: "Those who claim to

lead the masses must resolutely refuse to be led by them if we want to avoid mob law and desire ordered progress for the country. I believe that mere protestation of one's opinion is not only not enough, but in matters of vital importance, leaders must act contrary to the mass opinion if it does not commend itself for their reason". The present era is thus one of industrial evolution. Compulsion, intimidation, coercion, pressure, victimization, are terms that can have no place in the industrial concepts of non-violent transformation. Instead, the key words will be participation, confidence, consultation, co-operation and complete unity. The concept of socio-economic justice demands counteracting the adverse implications of industrialization on society.

According to me, industrial relations is nothing less than human relations. There is a great need for both the workers and the employers to sit together and solve mutual problems right across the table. Their interests have got to be intimate as without either of them the industry will not function and would collapse. Once this view is accepted by both the partners in the industrial system sincerely, many of the causes that lead to friction would not be there. The industry is not a private domain of the entrepreneur or an instrument of exploitation, but a social institution in which the industrialist, the labour force, the consumers and the nation have equal interests, inter-dependent in character. This is the crux of the problem of industrial relations, the magnitude of which has acquired new dynamism, depths and dimensions.

The moral fibre of the workers will be destroyed if only their rights are constantly being reiterated and they are never reminded of their responsibilities. Improving human nature and the humane outlook by instilling and evoking more mutual trust and confidence can pave the way for improving society. A new society, however, cannot be erected or founded on curses

and destruction. Hatred begets hatred. In the final analysis, both the worker and the management are the servants of the community which pays their wages and enjoys the fruits of their services. Mutual trust is a two-way traffic. Too much selfishness, too little vision, too little co-operation and too much mistrust toll the death-knell of healthy industrial relations. Yet a programme of co-operation for greater production is not always easy to accomplish. This is because the social implications of industrialization and the need for a plan of industrial adaptation are not fully comprehended by many who are in positions of authority. It highlights the need for *imbibing vision and strength of character*.

Transformation without tears is a gradual, but none the less peaceful, process with everlasting effect. Non-violent technique does not merely imply negation or absence of bloodshed, coercion and antagonism. On the contrary, it involves positive display of brotherly love, spontaneous discipline, compassion, mercy, generosity, service, tolerance, self-sacrifice and harmonious co-ordination. Every member of the industrial society would be *imbued with an implicit obedience to higher law*—the strength of the spirit and reverence for nobler values of life. Far from providing any solution to the already acute problem of disruption and disharmony, violent, aggressive methods of agitation only aggravate the malaise.

The process of levelling up and levelling down is inevitable in an egalitarian social order, so devoutly espoused by all right-thinking persons. Economic equality is thus the master-key for the fulfilment of the aspirations for national regeneration. Yawning gulfs between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' are a stumbling-block in the way of the establishment of a healthy, peaceful social order. Hence, the foundation in the shape of social and economic equalities has to be laid without delay. This foundation has to be raised by corporate and

withal non-violent self-effort.

The demands and the means of the workers should be just and clear. In addition to the emphasis on justice and fairplay, Gandhi formulated the following important principles which have a perennial value for all interested in trade unionism:

1. The workers or their leaders should study the pros and cons of the case carefully before formulating their demands; they should not exaggerate their demands; they should always be ready for correction if the opposite party is able to convince that the workers are in the wrong. Assistance of technical experts should be harnessed to elucidate the financial implications of their action vis-a-vis the industrial structure.

2. The weapon of strike which is in the armoury of the industrial workers should not be resorted to unless all peaceful and constitutional methods of negotiation, conciliation and arbitration are exhausted. Even during the course of a strike, workers should be prepared for any just settlement or reference to arbitration.

3. Peaceful and non-violent behaviour even under provocation is the *sine qua non* for obtaining justice through any mass struggle of this type. The workers, while on strike, should see that they do not damage the property or injure the person of anybody. They should not bear ill will to their employers or their officers, as the workers are fighting the evil in the employers and not the employers personally.

4. The workers should have a sound organization to look after and safeguard their just rights and interests. Members must pay their subscriptions regularly and maintain efficient office and staff.

5. Trade unions should conduct their activities strictly in a non-violent manner and adopt only such means as are consistent with truth.

6. The workers should behave as responsible citizens and have due regard for the interest of the industry and the country.

7. As a member of the democratic society the industrial worker should yield willing obedience to all laws. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the wellbeing of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member. Respect for law is the condition upon which our whole social order depends. Observance of the law is essential to public order and to the strengthening of the individual rights of our workers. Rights after all flow from duties well performed.

8. The workers should be self-respecting and therefore they should not rely on the funds raised by the sympathizers for successful conduct of a strike. A worker on strike should find out any alternative occupation to maintain himself and his family during this period, and no type of work should be considered as low or below one's dignity.

9. A strike is a form of 'satyagraha'. A striker, therefore, would not submit to superior force or hardship; once he resolves, the worker keeps firm to it and even at the cost of privations, including starvation, he sticks to the resolution.

10. While on strike, the workers should be truthful, courageous, just and free from hatred or malice towards anybody, and should be prepared for voluntary sacrifice putting their faith in the justness of their cause and winning public sympathy.

11. Unions should undertake activities which would result in an all-round development—physical, mental, moral and political—of the workers and their families.

12. The industry should be run to satisfy the requirements of the community; those who invest money in it and those who work in it should both be considered co-partners in the venture.

The emphasis is thus on class collaboration rather than on

class conflict and the concept of industrial co-partnership is founded on equality of status, dignity of labour and mutuality of interests between labour and management.

With faith in the people, with courage of convictions, and with able leadership India's yearning for carrying aloft the torch of Gandhian ideals of non-violent socialism need not be relegated into the Utopian dreamland of illusory reforms, but can be enthroned on the lofty pedestal of industrial democracy.



## Dr. Gyan Chand

*discusses the possibilities and potentialities of non-violent approach to the solution of economic problems confronting democracy in India.*

Non-violence in its positive aspect means and should mean:

(1) End of the existing social order which is based on violence and operates by the use of violent sanctions;

(2) Change of the present power structure which is based upon concentration of economic and political power on all points of strategic importance from base to top in a hierarchic order; and

(3) Inculcation of new values which should supersede the existing values which

(a) make labour an attribute of a process of exchange, i.e., convert it into commodity without any consideration for human and spiritual needs of the worker;

- (b) deprive the producer of the autonomy of decision and judgment and subject him even when he is self-employed—say, as a farmer or handicraftsman and a trader—to the pressure arising from the economy as a whole in its local, regional, national and international aspects and creates a sense of helplessness in face of gigantic forces over which he has and can have no control whatsoever; and this, of course, applies with much greater force to a producer in a highly mechanized and automated production undertaking;
- (c) create glaring and, in most parts of the world, even growing inequalities;
- (d) widen the gap between the rich and poor countries in the world economy with its increasing internal stresses; and
- (e) enable men of wealth, property and oligarchic power to misuse institutions, social functionaries and centres of public deliberation, formulation of policies and their execution and their utilization.

Non-violence, of course, involves the abstention from the use of coercive processes of different forms and degrees. But it is a social concept and is meant to be used as an instrument of social revolution. Only a mad man would prefer violence to non-violence when the latter can be effectively used to realize social ends. But in a world on the brink of nuclear annihilation, in which atrocious events like war in Vietnam, slaughter of communists in Indonesia and mounting tensions in China and European countries are the order of the day, non-violence cannot be treated as the holy dogma of purists but should involve restatement of eternal verities in relation to the situation in this country and the world as a whole. Non-violence is not abstention from coercive processes at any

cost. This rigid approach is rendered completely utopian in the existing context and cannot be and has not been practised.

What has happened and is happening in the land of Gandhi is a refutation of this dogma in its absolute sense. And yet with all the risks implicit in the use of violence in the present circumstances on local, national and world scale, it is the course of practical wisdom to explore fully the potential of non-violence as a means of ending the present social order and replacing it by a new social order of freedom, equality and brotherhood. The world is not going to wait for the pious invocation of the votaries of non-violence. The events are moving fast, and yet non-violence means compassion not merely as a personal virtue but primarily as an all-pervasive purpose of a social order and its animating and guiding principle.

Violence may be necessary and inescapable in certain conditions, and it was necessary and inescapable in Russian and Chinese revolutions and in the countries of Eastern Europe. It is also clear that it will be unavoidable in Latin America if the counter-revolutionary forces in ascendancy there with the overt support of the U.S.A. have to be defeated and the triumph of revolutionary forces rendered possible. Violence is inevitable there and that is also true of South Africa, Rhodesia, etc. The conclusion, of course, is that though the use of violence cannot be abjured in all cases and circumstances, in conditions in which non-violence has a fair chance of success, if the people can be aroused to the need for massive action for revolutionary purposes, it is highly desirable to evolve and use techniques of peaceful social revolution and apply them with a set purpose of making it a success in the general strategy and for specific purposes.

The choice between violence and non-violence is not a meta-

physical issue of life but is to be made in terms of social analysis and social strategy. Faith in peaceful action in certain circumstances has to be engendered and nurtured if it is, it may be repeated, realized that the issue cannot and should not be framed in absolute terms.

In India Gandhi's espousal of non-violence as a principle of social action and its earnest and uncompromising advocacy by Vinoba and his dedicated associates have given it a primacy of its own in our political and social thinking. The fact that the masses responded to Gandhi's call with enthusiasm and that a political pressure was generated, which made the withdrawal of the British from India look like a necessary and feasible proposition, has given to non-violence a presumptive position in the choice of alternatives in India. But the fruits of this uncompromising approach in practical terms have not been given due consideration by the exponents.

The government has had to resort to violence so often by military and police action to carry on administration and defend the country, and the outbreaks of violence in the country have been so frequent and chronic that we cannot with any justification postulate that as a people peaceful social action has become an integral part of our social ethos and our mores have been shaped by faith in non-violence as a basic principle. Our political and community life is so ridden and torn by violence that we cannot with any show of reason maintain that we have vindicated the supremacy of non-violence as a guiding principle of thought and action, and can posit the possibility of bringing about social revolution in this country by eschewing violence in all forms.

Vinoba's contribution in the form of Bhoodan and Gramdan has been magnificent in its own way and yet he has watered down his programme so much that there is no evidence to show that a social revolution in the villages is already under

way and our agrarian system is undergoing a radical basic change. In practical terms therefore it cannot be and should not be assumed that we have a special predisposition for, or have acquired special competence in, bringing about radical social changes by using non-violent and only non-violent methods.

The great teachers from Buddha to Gandhi, who have given us the message of peace, have had a profound impact upon us and the world. But we cannot on that account presume that love and peace from the point of view of social revolution have become an integral part of our being as a community and we can count upon being able to make peaceful social revolution our unique or specific contribution to the social experience of the comity of peoples. We as a people are as much liable to lapses from the path of love in our social evolution as any other people and cannot take it for granted that we will be able to blaze new trails in making revolutionary social changes.

The vital point is that in India our record as a people does not indicate that our thinking and behaviour have been guided or influenced by faith in non-violence and that we have been able to solve any of our urgent problems by adopting non-violent techniques or have made any headway in establishing or developing a new social order based upon justice, equality and brotherhood. Policies of the State have failed woefully to generate faith in the establishment of a just social order, and, owing to wide and widening gap between our professions and practices, invocation of the Gandhian principles and appeal to them has become an empty and meaningless ritual for keeping up appearances.

Our foreign policy of non-alignment, which signifies goodwill to all peoples and dedication to world peace, has been an expression of Gandhian principles in action and has achieved

a fair measure of success. But our deviations from the path of non-violence within the country, the increasing inequities of our economy and flagrant disregard of the interests of 'the lowliest and the least' in the formulation and execution of public policies have created such flagrant contradictions between what we practise at home and advocate in international conferences that the real significance of adherence to the principles of peace is largely impaired by this contradiction.

The complete failure of planning in this country is primarily failure of social faith and inability of the government and planning apparatus, such as there was, to think consistently and coherently in terms of the wellbeing of our poverty-stricken masses, whose lot, as everyone knows and admits, has been growing increasingly worse since independence, and in spite of the facade of the Panchayat Raj and the extensive, far-flung but largely ineffective community development organization, in relation to its avowed social purpose, they (the downtrodden masses) have had a diminishing share in understanding their own urgent problems or taking any steps for solving them.

The pathetic helplessness of these masses is greater than ever and they cannot possibly take any initiative in mitigating their own miserable lot or develop any social pressures for bringing home to the men in power that their limit of endurance has already been reached. There may be occasional revolts and the groups like Nagas and Mizos may even establish parallel governments and administer the affairs of their people, but in this 'largest democracy of the world' democratic processes hardly exist and there is no prospect of their being created or brought into operation. Decentralized democracy, which is taken to be the essence of non-violent social order, has been made into merely a skeleton of what it was intended to be and is a hollow sham.

The most damning feature of the present situation is that we, in almost all spheres that matter, are living in a world of make-believe; but we deceive no one except ourselves and the result is the prevailing atmosphere of general frustration and complete lack of faith in the government, in the bold declarations of intentions and policies, in our future and, what is much worse, in ourselves. This is really an erosion of mutual trust and confidence which, of course, is the very quintessence of a system based upon peace and goodwill among men, with mass murder of minorities becoming an everyday occurrence and inability and unwillingness of the government to deal with and even expose the sinister disruptive forces responsible for these occurrences. This increasing chaos in the country is due to the logic of the policies that have been and are being followed. In effect, it means that we are surrendering to the forces of greed, and insatiable appetite for wealth and power without any regard for sufferings of the masses.

The uncontrolled mounting spiral of prices in the last twelve or really twenty-five years has been the most painful result of this mounting degeneration and the government, owing to inability to take effective measures to curb it, wants to live with it and expects the people to do the same. That this is obviously impossible does not seem to matter to the men in authority. The erosion of purchasing power of money means the erosion of the very foundations of society. It points to the inevitable doom of the economy not in a state of recession but of disintegration in spite of bumper harvests and extravagant claims for what is called new strategy in agriculture. Inflation is the most awesome illustration of the mass suffering inflicted on the inarticulate masses owing to the pursuit of what, in effect, is policy of violence on a mass scale. We are living in a state in which economic development such as taking place is largely based upon violence by the government and the

powerful interests which depend upon it for support and to a very considerable extent influence and even determine its policies.

Violence is the order of the day and most of the grave evils from which we are suffering are directly due to it. It is quite clear that even though non-violence in its absolute sense is impracticable, economic development which further enriches the rich and further impoverishes the poor is not development at all, but regression in the worst form and is directly caused by violence in various forms and shapes. The conditions will get much worse, and not better, if the concern for and devotion to the wellbeing of the multitudes, who at present are carrying most of the burden of development but are rewarded by greater and still greater misery for their deprivations and hardships, do not become the highest priority of economic policy and programme, i.e., the end of exploitation is not made the prime object of our public endeavour.

Lack of self-reliance, which has been the besetting sin of the post-Independence economic policy, is almost entirely due to the real purpose of the policy of decentralized, integrated development having been completely lost sight of in our development, investment and reorganization policies. Dependence of our people on agriculture is increasing. Unemployment and under-employment in rural areas are, it is statistically established, becoming more and more serious, malnutrition of the vast majority of our people in the villages is becoming greater; their relative position as compared with that of the rural rich and the urban classes is becoming much worse, and they are in no position to end their servitude, and defy, resist and defeat their oppressors. As long as this state of things continues there is no possibility of the present inequitable state of things being terminated.

So far all plans and projects to improve the lot of this vast



majority through community development schemes, khadi, village industries, integrated rural industrialization projects, decentralized and integrated credit schemes and, of course, integrated development of agriculture have all failed miserably. These schemes and the revolution at the basic level, without which they cannot be successfully implemented, are the only way in which the masses in the villages can lift themselves out of the morass in which they are deeply sunk.

All the grand schemes of building modern organized industries and application of the latest techniques in agriculture, necessary and essential as they are, would only mean erecting a top-heavy super-structure without any firm or sound foundations, which would collapse under its own unsupported weight, and the masses will not only be not liberated, but there will be no material alleviation of their misery and sufferings. The present regime and its economic policies and programmes are based upon violence, oppression of the people and the growing power and wealth of the rich minority. Powerful foreign interests, which are in alliance with this minority and are really their masters, are not only undermining our economic independence but are also making a common cause with the rich at the top and intensifying the exploitation of the masses and making the obstacles in the way of their liberation even more formidable.

The masses have to be organized, their mass strength has to be built up, they have to be given a sense of purpose and destiny, to use their enormous productive power existing in the form of unutilized labour, acquire modern technique in agriculture and industry, generate their own capital resources and integrate their programme of self-reliance with the programme of self-reliance of the economy as a whole. This is really the old Gandhian programme and its substance is revolutionary at the basic level. It is the only way in which econo-

mic development at a rate urgently called for by the needs of the people and with their own resources can be accelerated and realized. For this purpose the causes of the colossal failures of the past have to be known and understood, real penitential thinking in Gandhian spirit has to be undertaken, and a determined will-to-action has to be created and developed. This is the way of non-violence and there is no other way to save and build up our country and its future.

## C. Parameswaran

*refers to the increasing manifestations of violence in our national life which pose a menace to democracy and challenge to non-violence.*

The people of India have accepted democracy, about two decades ago, as the central principle of the Fundamental Law of the land.

The fact which makes democracy a unique order or way of life is its fundamental emphasis on the right of individual citizen to freedom. This is well known. But what is usually ignored in practice is that a citizen's right to freedom is the right which he shares with all other citizens equally. It does not give any individual the right to deny, usurp, restrict or otherwise defile the right to freedom of any other individual. It flows from this that the right to freedom is the right inherent in every individual, in all men everywhere; that this right is

sacred and inviolate; and that on all citizens is enjoined the responsibility of upholding the sanctity of this right of every citizen of the body politic.

Democracy is a socio-political system or order of life whose centre of interest is man, the whole man—not the institutions. Its processes are evolutionary, those of change of progress—from fuller and higher life to yet fuller and yet higher life. Nothing in life is static. 'Change' is the law of Nature. If the change is not of progress, it follows, then, that it is of retardation and decline. What we learn from this is the obvious fact that if democracy is not given the environment and other positive conditions favourable for effective play of its natural role, or, if the processes and trends which dominate the outlooks and aims of politico-economic and other vital social fields are opposed to, or unfavourable for, the processes of change of progress, then, that will be setting democracy on the road to deterioration and decline.

We have no less an authority than Gandhi's that man's wellbeing, security and progress are possible only in conditions where disunity and violence are eschewed; where the spirit of dynamic peace and normal human relations prevail. And we are here irresistibly led to a serious consideration of the elements and character of the trends and tendencies which rule the thoughts and practices of large sections of the people. It is a widely admitted fact that the atmosphere and soil of present-day India is virtually imbued with the spirit of different categories of forces of conflict, disunity and violence. What seems very strange is that there are people who sedulously try to make out that the many manifestations of disunity and violence which we witness in different parts of the country are merely transient creations of changes taking place in industrial and economic development areas.

The argument of transient creations of changes in the econo-

mic development fields could carry weight if only there had not been these periodic outbreaks before the introduction of the development programmes. There is hardly enough evidence to show that these manifestations of violence are those of conflicts of socio-economic forces. It stands to reason to view the situation as one which is in continuity with a certain unenviable tradition of our past. We have not been as a nation living always ethically and spiritually inspired and motivated throughout our history. There had been lapses and most tragic lapses too. It is true we did not want to conquer, to subjugate, or to invade another's country. But we have our own unenviable record of fighting many a fratricidal war of bloodshed and destruction. We may well trace our record of these wars to about 4000 years back to the Kurukshetra of Mahabharata fame. And, as a people, we do not seem to have changed vitally or mentally very much since then. The seeds or the effects of these happenings do not get radically erased with the elapse of time.

In all the many cases of widespread disorder and destruction, which form a dominant feature of life of India today, there is little that suggests that this unenviable present remains wholly unrelated to the events which mark our unenviable past. One cannot deny the possibility of any newly emergent forces influencing the situation. But it is neither in the interest of truth nor in national interest to mix up things to suppress what is true or confuse vital issues. There are enough and more instances of fratricidal killings, looting and destruction of property, of inter-State quarrels, violations of womanhood, outrages on young children, dacoities, inter-religious rivalries, suicides, etc., in the present—which warrant the view that, in a good many cases, these appear to be a revival of the scores of distant past; that the present cases water and strengthen the old roots which, in their turn, send forth new ramifications

that, in the context of the dominant facts of today, yield shelter and food to many a newly emergent forces of conflict and violence. As a natural consequence of all this, the crisis India faces tend to multiply and deepen.

Let us note a few facts which substantiate the above statement. According to a Government of India statement—Crime in India, 1958—during the year 1958, 10,661 murders were committed in India. On a computation, a murder occurs in this country every hour. A volume of one murder per one hundred thousand of population is high, compared to some other countries. Another Government of India report on crime situation in 1959 says that during the year as many as 26,987 cases of rioting took place in the country. This figure registered a further increase from 24,992 cases reported in the preceding year, 1958.

The Assam riots of 1960 marked another tragic instance, which then almost stunned the whole country. The impact was so powerful that it accelerated pressures of communal riots in some other parts of the country, which were of the size that in some cases it took the army to quell them.

The student unrest and demonstrations of violence is a tragic instance of yet another category. A close investigation and study conducted by the Home Ministry of the Government of India disclosed that there were 1,237 cases of strikes and agitations by the students during 1958-64 period. The study covered cases in 54 universities, 670 colleges and 513 schools. Of the 1,237 cases, about 416 directly related to academic matters; 250 cases to the inadequacy of the teaching staff and lack of other facilities. In 100 cases the agitations were directed against the teaching staff. There were also non-academic causes of student unrest. Among these, 112 cases brought out the fact of direct involvement of political parties. One of the major factors which the Home Ministry's study

identified was group or caste politics in the management bodies of student institutions, and intrigues by teachers.

There is hardly anything chimerical about the spirit of student demonstrations of unrest and violence. It has remained dormant all the time. The character and extent of the student agitation in 1966 far exceeded all previous records. There were more cases of 'violent mobs' joining student demonstrations, when, together, they fought 'pitched battles' against the police, characterized, in some cases, by subtle demonstrations of guerilla warfare tactics. This time, unlike in the past, there were many cases of young school children, even of some of the primary schools, taking part in college and university student agitations and indulging in acts of hooliganism.

According to reliable reports, during the nine-week period of the 1966 student agitations, in Uttar Pradesh alone, 27 railway stations were damaged, and 18 police stations and 26 police outposts were raided. There were 395 cases of attack on public property, besides more than 50 cases of looting of public property and many cases of arson. The agitation was responsible for loss of nine lives and injuries to about 1,400 persons. The cost of property destroyed was estimated at nine lakhs rupees. Barring a few States in the South, this time, all other States, including Jammu and Kashmir, were affected by student violence.

It is not without its own significance that these demonstrations staged in different parts of the country showed a common pattern. They spoke of a countrywide organization, unity of purpose and training, discipline and direction. A deeper significance of this involvement of considerable sections of student population in these anti-social and extra-constitutional forms of agitations is that the flower of Indian Youth has been plucked off its natural historical roots and left adrift.

They are definite signs of the growing deterioration and decline of the unity of Indian Family, which is the permanent, sustaining unit of the Indian nation.

Again an expert study conducted some time ago by the Statistical Unit of the Central Bureau of Investigation of the Government of India revealed that one person committed suicide every 20 minutes, and that for every three women, four men lost their lives in India. In 1964, a total number of 29,734 persons committed suicide. The study disclosed also that more than 6,100 suicides were committed by children below the age of 18, which is 20.5 per cent of the total.

Then again, according to the Crime Statistics compiled by the Government of India, crime in India has shown a steady upward movement during the last five years from 1961 to 1965. In 1961 (average per quarter), the number of crimes committed totalled 157,000. In 1965 (for the quarter ending September, 1965), the total number of crimes committed was 183,000.

A new type of conflicts which feed yet more sumptuously the forces of violence and disruption that slowly, but surely, is creeping into the body politic of India is the kind of stateism which maintains 'Maharashtra for Maharashtrians', 'Bengal for Bengalese', 'Assam for Assamese', 'Madras for Tamils' and so forth. This shows that even linguism does not remain static. The new cry evidently is a logical step forward in the movement of linguism. It has the look of being a menace of many dimensions which would add enormously to the strength and magnitude of forces of violence and disruption which are already active in the country.

The picture of the forces arrayed against democracy, and which pose a challenge to non-violence and human progress, drawn above is true, but incomplete. The causes of communal violence had, as the world knows, existed in India for



long. We have the evidence from no less an authority than Dr. Rajendra Prasad\*, the late President of India, that these causes flourished early in the 19th century. In fact, the roots of these are traceable to internecine inter-State and inter-group feuds which disfigured India during periods long before the Arab hordes, under Kasim, overran Sindh and sowed fresh seeds of violence in the eighth century.

Events moved fast since then, but nothing happened all these years that could stop the rot. And today the forces of violence have, in a multitudinous diversity of forms and looks and poses, invaded many a realm of life of Indian society and continue to strengthen the processes of moral decline and spiritual decay. There are many people who hold the view that this tragic internal situation is a major cause which continues to thwart our efforts to establish good neighbourly relations with Peking and Rawalpindi.

All aspects of the situation duly considered, therefore, it seems that the first and foremost problem India faces is the problem of dealing with the continuing ascendancy of the forces of deterioration and violence. To deal with the problem adequately is to take it in its totality and treat it radically. It is in the adoption of this way of approach that Gandhi's concept of non-violence provides us with the much-needed inspiration and guidance.

Gandhi's fundamental thinking, which underlies his concept of non-violence, is that violence begets violence. Application of violence is not, and has never been, the effective way of saving peace in the world, and saving nations from the ravages of forces of violence. What he had asked the people to do was not the destruction of the forces of violence, but their replacement by moral and ethical forces.

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\**India Divided* : by Rajendra Prasad, 1946 edition

There are two areas of life in which, according to him, these ethical and spiritual forces can and should emerge and develop. The one is the realm of the individual. The other is the realm of politics. Gandhi advocated purity of life, the moral forces taking the place of the brute instinct and other causes of violence which are dormant in the individual. And he advocated spiritualization of politics in order that the stimulus of environment should be ethical and creative, so essential to ensure the ascendancy of the forces of amity and harmony. Social harmony and unity is unthinkable except in terms of promotion of harmony in fields of inter-personal life and relations.

Earlier, while considering the democratic concept of the right of individual freedom, we have noted how the exercise of the right of individual freedom contributes to the emergence and development of harmony of inter-personal relations and social consolidation and unity. Thus, the principle underlying the two concepts, of democracy and non-violence, are ideologically one and the same. There is in the two, one finds, an identity of processes and purposes.

Democracy and non-violence are mutually complimentary and inseparable. In this unity of the two concepts, we get our Indian national ideal. The chronic absence of a definite common ideal has been the great bane of our national life. It has fostered and strengthened causes of many serious conflicts. The great sociologist, Dr. Carl Kelsay, maintains that absence or inadequacy of training of the individual in common ideal is the cause of serious mental conflicts. A person who is without this training, he says, "may see nothing wrong in theft, in counterfeiting coin, rape, unnatural offences, or even homicide, if his own ideals are depraved or immoral. . . . He may, however, have great respect for the laws of some other different system which operates in conflict with the recognized government of his country".

It is thus seen that our truthful, conscious acceptance of the democratic ideal, integrally related to the concept of non-violence, which is Gandhi's gift to the nation, is the way of our secure, peaceful life of prosperity and progress of the future.

## Balraj Madhok

*suggests the ways to eradicate violence from our body politic.*

Democracy has been variously defined as government by discussion, a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and a government in which the people directly participate. Whatever the definition may be, the fact remains that in a democracy the people have a right to make themselves felt in so many peaceful ways. They can decide as to who should run the government by choosing men of their choice at the time of elections. They can hold meetings, stage demonstrations, pass resolutions and take deputations to the authorities concerned to express their views on various matters of interest to them and demand redress or solution. They can also change the government and install a new government through the ballot-box. This system, therefore, has a superiority over dictatorship where the military dictator or the

party boss does not permit any other party to exist. The people cannot change the dictator by peaceful means. He generally comes by sword and goes by sword. In extreme cases, people can and do raise the banner of armed revolt resulting in bloodshed. In a monarchical system, the ruler comes to the helm of affairs by succession but normally he too cannot be removed without an armed rebellion unless he has good sense to obey the people's will voluntarily through abdication. Therefore, violence cannot completely be ruled out in monarchical and authoritarian systems of government. Armed rebellion is and will remain the last weapon with those who want to bring about a change of master or masters in such forms of government. Democracy is the only form of government in which violence can be completely ruled out. People in a democracy can get all that they want without resort to force or arms.

A revolution can also be brought about in a democracy as happened in India in 1967. But such a democratic revolution is brought about by peaceful means and therefore stands as a class apart. Freedom of thought, expression and association are the essential pre-requisites and concomitants of democracy. Therefore, it is essential that not only these freedoms are scrupulously respected by the powers that be, but they must also give due weight to the suggestions and demands put forth through peaceful and democratic ways. Democracy cannot succeed without giving due respect and recognition to democratic processes and institutions. Where it is done, the people can voice their feelings and get things done through democratic methods and democratic institutions. As such, there remains neither the need nor any justification for taking resort to violent methods.

India has chosen to be a democracy based on adult fran-

chise. We have had four general elections during the last 20 years. Traditionally India is a land of tolerance in which conformism of any kind has always been looked down upon. Freedom of thought is the basic principle of Indian culture and philosophy. Acceptance of all forms of worship as different paths leading to a common objective has been the quintessence of Indian thought in regard to religion. *एकं सद् विप्राः बहुवा द्रवन्ति* is the Vedic exhortation about the unity of Godhead "which is called by many names by the wise". As such, India is ideally suited for democracy. In fact, India can well be called the mother of democracy. Great republican States flourished here long before the Greeks had even conceived the idea of democracy.

India is also a land of non-violence. *"आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु"* "Treat others as you would like to be treated by others", is the Vedic exhortation in this respect. It has produced great apostles of non-violence like Vardhaman Mahavir, Lord Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi. Still we find that there is more violence in this country than in any other democratic country of the world. Every agitation, whether of the students or the factory workers, or the white-colour functionaries, takes a violent form sooner or later. The violence on the part of democratic government is no less. There have been more police firings and lathi charges during the last 20 years of freedom than during 100 years of British rule. This situation only baffles any democrat. He wonders how Indian democracy and this growing violence can go together and he, naturally, sees a grave threat to the future of democracy and democratic institutions if this violence continues. The question therefore arises: why violence has not been eradicated in spite of the establishment of democracy and what steps should be taken to see that non-nviolence is observed in thought and action in the country?

To my mind, the first pre-requisite for eradicating violence in India is to make the democratically elected rulers show proper respect for democratic institutions, means and methods. They must pay proper attention to the people's wishes when they are expressed through democratic methods of public meetings or resolutions or peaceful demonstrations. They should make up their mind quickly whether a demand is just and correct or not. If the demand is just, they should not dilly-dally in accepting it. If they are convinced that the demand is unjustified and its acceptance will not serve the ends of justice, then they must firmly reject it after reasoning it out with those who put forth the demand. They must also take the general public into confidence in regard to the stand they have taken in order to isolate those who persist in unreasonable or wrong demands. But actually what has been happening in this country is that when a demand or a request is put forth in a democratic way it is seldom heeded. No attempt is made to go into the merits or demerits of the demand. An authoritarian approach is adopted towards those who put it forth. But when the same people take to violent methods, start burning buses, looting public property and beating up officials, then the same democratic rulers find arguments and justification for accepting that demand. As a result, the impression has gone round in the country that only violent and agitational methods succeed. This has put a premium on violence and violent methods and even those who are intellectually convinced about the incompatibility of violence with democracy sometimes feel constrained to take to violent methods to get the just and reasonable demand accepted. It is, therefore, my considered opinion that the first essential for making non-violence prevail in public affairs in the Indian democracy is that democratic rulers of the country should develop a democratic approach to the national problems. Autho-

ritarian ways and democratic institutions and forms cannot go together for long. They should be prepared to court even temporary unpopularity by resisting violence and violent pressure till the people begin to feel that violence will not pay and that their grievances and demands can be redressed through peaceful and democratic ways.

Secondly, leaders of opposition parties should also be clear in their minds that they cannot go on harping on democratic rights while taking resort to undemocratic and violent methods to achieve those rights. For that matter a clear distinction will have to be drawn between the parties which really believe in democracy and those which only want to use it for getting control over the governmental apparatus and then impose an authoritarian regime over the country through that apparatus. It is the duty and responsibility of the democratic parties and elements whether in power or outside to make a concerted effort to isolate and expose those parties and elements which do want to make use of democratic liberties but have no faith in democracy as such. If they continue the present policy of submitting to the undemocratic pressures of such parties, they would be only prompting others to toe their line and follow their methods. The initiative in this matter must come from persons in power who have risen to their present position by the ladder of democracy.

A third necessity to root out violence is to create a sense of security and fairplay in the mind of the common people. So long as the feeling persists that particular sections of society are given a favoured treatment while even the most legitimate rights and interests of others are trampled under foot for the sake of securing block votes of particular groups in the elections, the faith of the people in democracy and democratic methods will continue to be undermined. Very often violent and rowdy elements in the body politic of the country get



sustenance and encouragement from the highpriests of democracy and non-violence themselves. Complete equality before law, equality of opportunity and no discrimination either in favour of or against any individual or group of individuals on the basis of birth, caste or creed are essential pre-requisites for creating faith in democratic values in the people in general.

Unless this is done and persons at the top set the right example of democratic and non-violent behaviour, all talk of non-violence is going to remain mere eye-wash. Non-violence like democracy is not a matter of forms but of convictions and outlook. They represent a way of life, a method of ordering relations and shaping things in a society. They demand respect for certain basic values for which Indian culture has stood all through the ages. You cannot have non-violence and democracy by denouncing that culture day in and day out or equating it with those cultures and ways of life which idolize violence.

At the same time, non-violence should not be carried to the extreme limit by suggesting that the country need have no armed forces. A strong and powerful army and preparedness for war are as much guarantees for non-violence within the country as for its security against armed aggression from outside. So non-violence in the social and political life of the country and preparedness to face violence when it comes from any external source must go side by side. Even democracy and non-violence have to be sustained by preparedness to use force in the wider interests of the society and the country.

## R. Achuthan

*discusses the importance of basing our democratic system on an adequate philosophic foundation of which non-violence is a major constituent.*

India has accepted democracy as the system to build up her resources and to eradicate her poverty and ignorance, safeguarding the freedom of the individual which is the basis of all human development. This fact of India's acceptance of democracy is writ large in the Directive Principles and the vital provisions of the Constitution which the Indian people as a whole have given themselves.

But in this huge effort, do we have a philosophy that inspires and guides us? We should not fight shy of the fact that the people who have accepted democracy are not sure of its mental and socio-political moorings and its possibilities. Their commitment to democracy is willing, instinctive and charac-

teristic, but not the result of rational study. What we have of democracy today is but a pathetic imitation of a pattern of the democratic West, a mere institutional superstructure, erected virtually on quicksands, cut off from its native political environment. The need is really great and urgent for adding the Indian reality to it.

The Soviet Union and China, for instance, are even inspired and guided by a definite philosophy—the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism—which supports and sustains their social and political systems and which determines their social, cultural and ideological objectives and goals in national and international terms. With the weapon of Marxism they have fought crude superstitions and built up their faith in moulding their destiny by making use of science and technology.

But dictatorship and totalitarianism do not accept the principle of unity-in-diversity, which is one of the fundamental elements of democracy. And with the non-acceptance of this principle, they also reject the principle of inherent right to freedom of the individual. They believe only in imposed uniformity—imposed from 'above'. They do not believe in the spiritual dimensions of the human being, and do not care, therefore, for the natural dignity and freedom of the individual in the processes of the working of their social systems.

Acceptance of democracy as the social and political system is bound up with our characteristic recognition of the spiritual principle in man. Man is not merely the body; he is the spirit also. While there is bound to be differences at the bodily level, there is abiding unity from the spiritual point of view. It is this unity-in-diversity that we are called upon to preserve, strengthen and sustain in the functioning of the democratic systems.

Democracy, hence, is a way of life, of all-round development

and progress of the individual and society for the realization of the greatest and the best in them. It is a movement against ignorance, injustice and tyranny of all shades, at all levels.

Democracy puts maximum emphasis on the development of human personality and the development of the diverse traits of human society, aiming at the creative unity. Personality is the focus of individual freedom and social development. It is only through the development of human personality, individuals and society can improve. Any political and economic system which ravages the human personality is opposed to democracy which is basically committed to the flowering of human personality.

The personality of man can develop only through integrated work. It is only when the three dimensions of human personality, body, mind and soul, act and react with the corresponding three dimensions of work, personality development takes place. A democratic social order should give every man opportunities for this creative work and this is the inherent feature of democracy.

The framework of democracy can be run by people for the good of all only with the help of character. More than any social system democracy requires fundamentally the basic moral character. This character involves practice of Truth, non-violence and the moral courage to stand for one's convictions and the preparedness to suffer for them.

Democracy can function only if it can evolve an economic system based on democratic values—of decentralization of wealth and power; concentration of these will always work against the letter and spirit of democracy. The primary necessities of life should be produced in plenty and the means of production in relation to these basic needs should be in the hands of the people. There should be adequate use of science and technology to proper advantage so as to enable people

to live above want and be happy without creating problems of the alienation and dehumanization of man.

In the context of democratic functioning in the socio-economic field, the trusteeship formula, advocated by Gandhi, has to be properly understood. Trusteeship, according to Gandhi, helps the development of proper social consciousness in a democracy. All our talents should be used for individual and social betterment, as we are only trustees of what we hold in possession. Thus, the farmer is a trustee of the soil; the teacher is a trustee of the children in his charge; the administrator is a trustee of the good of the governed, and so on. If the trusteeship is ever abused or misused, there is always the democratic freedom to apply the non-violent remedy of satyagraha and get the wrong righted. But we are not to do violence to another man's opinion, nor can we suppress another man in his exercise of equal freedom. Viewed thus, non-violence is an element inherent in democracy, while violence is its worst enemy.

Eternal vigilance being the price of freedom, for the successful working of the democratic system, the maintenance of an unfailing attitude of dynamic non-violence is required. Those who wield the weapon should well know the mechanics of its use in the democratic set-up. People should accept non-violence also for the redress of grievances in fields of civic life. Parties to the dispute should seek settlement through purposeful discussions and negotiations in a proper spirit of give-and-take.

To make democracy succeed a comprehensive and well integrated system of education is a first priority. It should be dynamic. It should inculcate ideas of democratic values. The system advocated by Gandhi significantly leaned heavily on 'training' in the practical application of these values. It stood for constructive responsibility on the part of all partici-

plants.

Another requirement for the success of democracy is people's faith in it and in the inherent goodness of human nature. Both Marx and Gandhi put faith in the people. They wanted the people to wield power; they had faith in the capacity of people to regulate and manage and control their affairs. Gandhi wanted that the differences of castes and class, etc., should go. He wanted to achieve this through education, through life of non-violence.

Non-violence is not agreement with the status quo. Support to 'status quo' smacks of reaction and violence and injustice. And so non-violence is and should be used as an uncompromising challenge to this reaction and injustice whatever may be the form or the character of the status quo. The initiative to fight this evil should come from the people, as in others. But in the use of the weapon of non-violence, in every case, both the method and the goal should be clear-cut and pure. The use of non-violence for narrow, selfish ends is objectionable and wrong; nor are we to follow wrong methods to achieve right ends. Non-violence is, so to say, the breath of democracy.

To build a stable democratic edifice, one of the essentials is the development of the power of initiative in the people. They should know the technique used at various levels of building a truly democratic society and maintaining the democratic State. This requires leadership of different categories. There should be trained cadres who will impart the democratic vision and knowledge to common people. Gandhi gave his constructive programme to the people to usher in the democratic order, which yet remains as the greatest training programme. The goal of all this has been the transfer of power to the people.

Democracy is not merely an exercise in fields of 'rights' of man. It is first and foremost duty-based: duty to oneself, duty to fellow-man, duty to the society. A good social order

should give every man opportunities for the fulfilment of the duty. To give this opportunity for everyone is an essential characteristic mark of democracy. But this is flouted by all other systems.

Man has three basic hungers. He has the physical hunger for food, clothing and shelter which are his primary demands for normal sustenance of life. The second is the mental hunger for knowledge and ideas. This is necessary for the development of his mind. The third basic hunger is the hunger of the spirit; it makes man religious and spiritual and elevates him from ordinary mundane levels. These three basic hungers demand satisfaction and the democratic social order resting on and sustained by its philosophic roots should ensure conditions for it.

It is axiomatic, they say, that where there is no vision, societies and people languish and perish. If people are to march together in a democracy, there should be a perennial vision that inspires them powerful enough to absorb the shocks and turmoils which may come upon their lives. The human goal has to be defined and the vision kept steady. Thus the student, the worker, the peasant, the teacher, the lawyer, the statesman, the doctor—all have to be inspired and led by the vision, from which they should derive all their motivations. The crisis which we face today is the direct result of the absence of this vision.

The inherent religious, spiritual and cultural thought-structure of India, in its every nature, is congenial and helpful for the determination and formulation of the philosophy of democracy. Our heritage enjoins on us the responsibility of looking at and seeing the whole world as *Virat*, the Cosmic Personality of God. Being loyal to this heritage, we should strengthen the process of Cosmic evolution by helping the evolution of the individual in the right way. This must lead to the proper understanding of our latent talents and powers

which should be well developed and canalised towards the lasting common good of the people as a whole by means of mutual trust, amity, fellowship and co-operation.

So then our supreme need is the restatement of our philosophy to help our national reconstruction. We should recast our educational system to give the necessary training in the ideology and methodology of democracy. We should create a national cadre of workers who will build up the necessary democratic leadership at various levels of life. We should take steps to build up the democratic personality of man, build up home as the creative social unit of democracy, reorganize our social, political and economic institutions on the basis of democratic values and create a temper of democracy in human relationship. Democracy cannot fulfil itself without an integrated philosophy and philosophy cannot become real without entering into the urges and pangs of the striving men in a society.



## T. K. Mahadevan

*says democracy must be interpenetrated with Truth to promote non-violence.*

What is democracy? There was a time when we could answer this question with reasonable clarity. Today I am not so sure. It has become as elusive as the old conundrum, 'What is truth?' The chief reason for this erosion of meaning, I believe, is that it has become one of our fashionable vogue-words. And like everything that gets into the fashion, it has progressively lost its clear-cut contours. Like that other vogue-word, peace, democracy is something that no nation dare openly reject. This dishonesty has spawned a wide variety of 'democracies'—direct, indirect, parliamentary, non-parliamentary, basic, guided, multi-party, one-party and so on. It is our new democratic circus.

In India, we add to this confusion a further ingredient. We call it 'Indianness'—somewhat like the 'un-American' phobia that pursues intellectual life in the United States. We have some vague notion that whatever ideas we may borrow from anywhere, we must first Indianize them. Our socialism—such as it is—must be 'Indian' socialism. What this can mean I have not the ghost of an idea. It may be only a pale recast of Fabianism; or it may be good old Marxian socialism watered down to a digestible level; or it may be a mixture of many things. But when the politician, whose intellectual background may be questionable, stands up on the platform, clears his throat and speaks wistfully of our national goal of 'Indian' socialism and democracy, the crowd coos in approbation.

If tomorrow I were to run down democracy as a failure and a fraud, I would at once invite suspicion on my head as an un-Indian, unpatriotic heretic and traitor. This is because man is essentially an idolatrous animal. We are too fond of the petty little idols with which we surround ourselves. Once in a long while an iconoclast comes among us—a Buddha or a Gandhi—questioning the very foundations of our thinking. We first suspect them, then we suffer them, and finally we spirit them away. Historians call this the Indian genius of 'absorption'. Of course, that is only a way of saying that we reject them. 'Absorption' is one of those euphemisms that save us from the discomfort of calling a spade a spade. Popular mythology, sedulously fostered by the champions of Indian 'secularism', has it that Hindu India has successfully absorbed and assimilated Buddhism. Nothing is farther from the truth. Despite the dharma-chakra on our flag, the Asokan lion capital on our insignia and things of that kind, the honest truth is that we not only rejected the Buddha—this prince among iconoclasts—long ago but we have stuck to our rejection. It was struck dumb the other day when one

of our eminent leaders, speaking to a Buddhist from another country, referred glibly and with much self-satisfaction to the Indian recognition of the Buddha as one of Vishnu's avatars! From the tone of his voice when he said this, I was sure he was unaware that this is precisely how India rejected the Buddha.

No, we don't like anyone tampering with our idols, whether metaphysical or wordly. When Gandhi spoke to us of true and false democracy, we listened to him in stony silence and went our way. To hell with the truth! Leave us at peace with our toys of self-deception! We are not Mahatmas!

The trouble with the human race is that it is chronically unwilling to accept its finiteness. This is particularly so today on account of our being inebriated with our astounding technological breakthroughs. Puny, finite man, drunk with his new-found power, is beginning to play God, forgetting that his power is over others, not over himself. The gumptious optimism of the nineteenth century, which we thought was dead, has come back in a new garb.

Our newest and most jealously guarded idol, the idol of democracy, is no less finite or transitory just because it appears to be so inescapable. No doubt it is historically true that men have tried other forms of government before they arrived at democracy and it may not be easy for them to revert to those earlier forms even on an experimental basis. But it would be foolish to deny that democracy, like all human ideas, is itself based on a myth which we may one day outgrow as surely as we have outgrown our other myths. There is nothing durable about democracy. The proliferation of democratic forms which we are witnessing today is itself a sign that the so-called democratic ideal is proving to be an idol with clay feet.

What some writers have begun to call the 'technotronic' age—that is, the age of technology and electronics, of cybernetics and thinking machines—is already setting in in some of

the advanced countries, particularly the United States. The industrial age, at whose doors we are battering hard, is passing. The industrial revolution, which elevated (or reduced) heaving and hauling man into a machine-minder, is giving place to the technotronic revolution which, at its height, will take away even that modicum of nut-and-bolt activity from his hands, relegating him to the unenviable position of a queen bee, spawning his own kind and doing precious little else.

The acceleration of the power and range of human ideas is something which many of us in India have not yet learnt to understand. We go on as if little has changed since the days of Robespierre and Lenin. We imagine democracy to be a static ideal and try to force our dynamic new world into the old Procrustean bed. This misperception of tempo is dangerously widespread and affects our thinking in more than one crucial field—in war and peace, violence and non-violence, democracy and dictatorship, socialism and capitalism.

In this rapidly changing situation, the choice before India is clear. On the one hand, we can continue to walk the road we have chosen for ourselves, 'industrialize' ourselves to our eyebrows, ape our Western mentors and hope for the best. Or we can turn around and follow Gandhi. There is no third way.

If we choose the first alternative, we must be clear in our minds that whatever we may do, move heaven or hell, we are never, never going to catch up with the advanced nations. In absolute terms we may achieve a great deal (and accumulate the tinsels and baubles that the West would have by then thrown away), but in relative terms we shall still be backward. It is a long road and a long haul. And the fruits are anything but tempting.

On the other hand, if we choose to turn about-face and follow Gandhi, we shall at least have the satisfaction of being

out of the mad race. We would still be backward, but backward only by other people's yardsticks, not our own. This is what Gandhi meant when he spoke of true and false democracy. What we have in our country today is the false kind of democracy, its outward glitter hiding the hollow within. To imagine that this kind of democracy can go with non-violence is to misunderstand Gandhi completely. Our democracy must first be interpenetrated with truth (that our sages have called 'dharma') before it can be a handmaid of non-violence.

## Dr. J. Holmes Smith

*suggests that Truth (Dharma) should be the basis for the reconstruction of Indian Democracy.*

A Satya Vir Andolan ("Truth Hero Movement") is the need of this most critical hour in India's history. In a day when our national weaknesses are aggravated by the common lament that we have in this supreme crisis no leader of the stature to inspire and lift our people, there is need of an awakening to the real and living presence of all the heroes of Truth who have gone before us. Can we imagine that these moral and spiritual giants have ceased to exist, or that they are indifferent to, or aloof from the Motherland in the hour of her direct peril? They must be vividly, potently with us, to lead us through our Kurukshetra. A recent cartoon has Mahatma Gandhi saying to Martin Luther King, "The interesting thing about assassins, Dr. King, is that they always think they have killed you!"

What better time than the Gandhi Centenary period to launch a movement to foster an awakening to the vivid Presence of the heroes of Truth and the realization of the Supremacy of Truth which such an awakening should inspire ?

Furthermore, this happens to be a moment in occult history when Truth is a striking keynote. Two evidences of this in different continents may be cited as examples. One is the fact that the Mother Divine, as she is widely regarded in Pondicherry, in Her special messages of the past few years, has over and over been stressing Truth: "Salute to the advent of the Truth." "Let us serve the Truth." "Cling to Truth." "Truth does not depend on any external circumstances, and shall manifest in spite of all bad will or opposition." Specially striking was the Mother's 1967 New Year message, "Men, Countries, Continents! The choice is imperative: Truth or the abyss." Most recent have been: "The best way to hasten the manifestation of the Divine's Love is to collaborate for the triumph of the Truth" and "Truth alone can give to the world the power of receiving and manifesting the Divine's Love."

An occult phenomenon which has impressed the learned and conservative investigators of the "Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies" in England, has been the remarkable series of messages transmitted by "the Angel of Worthing", an occult being who calls himself simply "Truth".

Studying the world crisis and the India crisis within it, one can readily conclude that this is "the moment of truth" in that crisis, and that it calls for what we may call "a Great Truth Encounter" on the world scene. Indeed, I have come to see that it is only through such a truth encounter that the Cold War can be resolved, the problem of the present Red China regime be solved, and a new era of disarmament, peace and world reconstruction be ushered in. I believe that India is destined to raise this great truth issue in the U.N. General

Assembly. This is too big an issue to go into further in this article.

On the Indian scene also it is not a moment too soon to generate a Great Truth Encounter, whose first state must be a vast Truth Awakening.

Modern life around the world has degenerated under the impact of high-powered propaganda which pervades our public life, until unconsciously the standard of truth has sunk dangerously low, so that it has manifestly become "Truth or the abyss". A Great Truth campaign worldwide, beginning in India, is the only answer, the only hopeful crux of this super-crisis.

It is in this context that we see more clearly the significance for the human story of what dawned upon the Vedic seers, the intuitive realization that man is a citizen of the universe, subject to the universal moral and spiritual order. He must harmonize with the nature of Reality, the Laws of Life and the Way of Life they imply. Rather than utilize over-much the old concept of "Dharmarajya", why not substitute that of Satyarajya, which can have relevance also for all who have a scientific rather than a religious approach to life?

The Sovereignty of Truth, Truth Supreme, integrally conceived, Truth for the whole of Life, let this replace our present shoddy presumptuous standard, our modern product of the fading age of rationalism and materialism—the assumption that it is the State that is sovereign, whereas in Vedic society it was the cosmic moral and spiritual order, Dharmarajya, or better, Satyarajya, that was truly sovereign.

In any struggle between contending forces, Reality will win. You may beat the other fellow for a time but you cannot beat the universe! Reality will decide the issue in the not-too-long run.

Man is a late-comer to the universe. He had better admit



that he is not the lord of creation, as his egoistic strutting on the stage of history often seems to assume. Man did not create Reality; his struggle upward from the brute is marked by his increasing discovery of Reality and, however reluctantly, his aligning himself with it. The School of Life has taught us that harmonizing with Reality means life, and defying it, death.

The universe is cosmos, not chaos. Therefore we must respect and obey the laws of life, the nature of Reality, if we would survive. We are very dependent beings on an infinitesimal speck in a universe where our planet is dwarfed by a sun 1,300,000 times earth's size, and by enormous heavenly bodies ("quassars") one of them thus far discovered being the size of 10,000,000,000,000 suns!"

It is notable in this connection that both science and spirituality have the same approach to truth—open, humble, experimental, undogmatic and self-disciplined.

Truth, now most violated the world around, must become most respected and sovereign. Truth must be the light and the dynamic for India's regeneration and for world reconstruction. The only guarantee we have as we face our Kurukshetra is "Satyam eve Jayete" (Truth always conquers). And in the Latin, "Magna est veritas et praevallebit". (Great is truth and its hall prevail). What better assurance could we desire ?

# Dr. Ralph T. Templin

*observes that only a non-violent democratic revolution based on the sovereign right of citizens can avert the crisis facing humanity.*

Democracy is on trial for its life. Its survival and the survival of Western civilization are so harshly threatened that no person remains outside the struggle.

To accomplish a revolution in democracy, we must rethink, reformulate and revitalize our own convictions. Democracy, revolution against entrenched power—democracy, the continuous peaceful shaping and reshaping of governments and societies by the people—has been betrayed. It is not too late to return again to the original democratic path.

## *Betrayal of Democracy*

The early history of democracy in the United States shows that it was conceived as something distinct from, and even

opposite in nature to, the competitive, autocratic and highly nationalistic nation-States existing in Europe at that time.

Democratic principles, as they were promulgated by this nation's founders, were universally applicable: all men are created with equal rights; government by consent of the people. These were not concepts which could be restricted to any segment of mankind or monopolized by particular national groups. An ethno-centric, aggressive democracy which lives by tyranny and exploitation is blasphemy against our democratic heritage.

In 1953, in an address before a Chicago audience, the late Justice Rober H. Jackson declared that "no nation is more force-minded than our own". He was concerned with the democratic betrayal, the self-contradiction implied by this force-mindedness. He saw the Western world turning away from reason and legitimacy to the accumulating instruments of physical power. Can we profess to offer a saving faith to the world, he asked, while engaged in the surrender of belief in law and the rule of law? He pointed out that it is the special function of democratic law to put "rational restraints upon the use of coercive power by those in authority". Such, he noted, is the real mark of distinction between democratic legal philosophy and communism which, according to Vishinski, is only "expressing the will of the dominant class...the compulsive will of the State".

This precise statement of the legal case between two incompatible ways of life, one of them tracing its roots from the Magna Carta, shows how impossible it is for the force-minded to either preserve or defend democracy. The West's taking, as alternative to the way of law, to the way of preponderant military strength has already dealt slow death to democracy in many nations.

Throughout the United States, a nation calling itself the

world's greatest democracy, human rights are sacrificed daily to the material aspirations of dominant sectional, racial and business interests. Laws permitting racial segregation are blatantly immoral. Those fostering or contrived to protect monopolization and the concentration of land and wealth in the hands of a few persons or corporations sanction economic tyranny. Legalizing the operations of an industrial system which provides for the personal enhancement of a few at the expense of the many is as undemocratic as dictatorship.

Set forth in the Constitution of this nation is an expression of the people's sovereign right to exercise control over every level of constituted authority. All phases of citizenship—local, State and national—were to be experienced and practised simultaneously. No authority at any level was to be regarded as final. The regulatory agencies of government were to serve the people, not hinder and restrain them. Individual members of the society retain the constitutional right to modify, manipulate and, if need be, even to overthrow government authority. This belief and practice the new nation was prepared to make secure as its basic way of life.

Today, in sharp contradiction, both conservatives and liberals tell us that a vast system of national interests and defence commitments extending into every part of the world must be maintained to defend our way of life. And this is too often directed against aroused and resisting peoples who are striving to emulate our original ideals and who proclaim their right to cast off foreign domination and gain or regain self-determination. These far-flung national interests must be defended at all cost, despite democratic opposition at home. American capitalism is now a way to be preferred above democracy itself, and the right of sovereign citizenship with which we began this nation may have to be sacrificed.

In all the places beyond our borders, our national interests

have been the precise opposite of those of the original American way. The framework within which international relations have existed or developed is that of the war system and the diplomacy of the national agencies, which is based upon the war system. A United Nations organization cannot change this fact until certain areas of national authority are surrendered to it—until nations use the United Nations for something more than settlement of differences. The very philosophy, spirit and attitude of the present role of this country in the United Nations are subversive of the principles of our original democracy.

Open World Expansionism has more or less dominated this country's foreign policy for about the last seventy-five years. A part of the expansion achieved under this policy has been colonial territory frankly possessed outright, "belonging to, but not a part of, the United States", in the words of a Supreme Court decision. Most consistent, however, has been the United States' noncolonial expansion in other nations: their markets, deposits of natural resources, and finance-capital establishments. Such nations become "clients", defined in international law as just one step removed from the subserviency of being under colonial rule. Such countries must vote as the dominant power dictates—in all United Nations issues, for instance. This is what Jawaharlal Nehru called "the invisible empire of the United States".

### *Violence: the barrier to international peace and order*

If we give the term imperialism a broad application, yet use it with accurate connotation in its narrower political application, we find that people are imperialistic when, for any reason, or with any cultural pretext of superiority (personal, class, trusteeship, benevolence or otherwise), they seek to

manage other people and the affairs of other people on the assumption that those people cannot properly manage themselves; or when for reasons of their deep-seated inferiority, they simply downgrade others in order to upgrade themselves. Imperialism is initially psychological and is usually a mixture of these two: the concern to influence other people and the working out of unconscious inferiority.

We can understand, then, how imperialism works out from its human centre in many forms—national, race, class, religious, economic, social, institutional or purely mental—and in such strange mixtures of parts that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the pretext of superiority from the end-value being sought. Everything from Europe was from the first considered superior to whatever counterpart existed in any other part of the world. This idea is still prevalent in the West.

The following of the European way continues to be the chief barrier to achievement of democratic law and order in international relations.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote :

“Empire and democracy are two incompatibles; one must swallow the other. And in the political and social conditions of the modern world, empire must either liquidate itself or drift to fascism, and, in so drifting, carry its domestic structure with it.”

Gandhi knew that no empire ever liquidated itself. He saw more clearly, perhaps than anyone else, those political and social conditions of the modern world which were bringing this international confrontation of the two incompatibles to the climax of a great world crisis. Democracy might free itself from imperialism of whatever kind, but only if people everywhere would democratically rise up to overthrow

empire, exactly as they did when the Thirteen British Colonies of North America secured their self-rule.

We cannot lead the free world—a free world organized and established upon law—until we want a world order based upon law. We want things we cannot have in that kind of world, want them for ourselves, as Americans, in our national interests, to maintain our higher standards, to continue to hold the bulk of the world's resources. We expand our economy with a moral weakness that paralyses the strength and destroys the integrity we need to win friends in Asia and Africa and the Americas. Our leadership depends upon a most precarious and dangerous balancing of military power. We have been induced by our national interests, idealistic and glamorous as we can possibly make them, to turn our back upon our original way of security and peace established upon law. This has been the great subversion of our history.

What is required is not the aligning of people against their nations or governments, but a determination among all people to snatch their nations back from the precipice of annihilation engendered by the utilization of naked and lethal force, and a redirecting of these nations towards order and survival. There can be no higher democratic responsibility and obligation of citizenship in any nation than this. The call demands greater courage than has ever been known in war—the call to be honest and to be human at the same time, to accept any penalty of insecurity or suffering or death in freedom from either fear or rancour, to embrace all humanity as friends. There can be no higher democratic ideal, no finer expression of American loyalty and citizenship.

A people's revolutionary world movement means perhaps the deepest, the most profound revolution in the history of modern democracy. The rising tide of popular sentiment against violent action must be organized within the present.

To create peace and order, we must earnestly organize ourselves to carry democracy for the first time outside our national boundaries; we must establish it as our forefathers did before us within our nation, but we must use only non-violence as our method of struggle; we must learn as soon as we can all that a non-violent struggle involves, and familiarize ourselves with such non-violent techniques as the educative, the democratic, the co-operative and community processes.

We cannot approach such a position without refusing, as the minimum essential of the democratic way, to support warmaking or aggressive behaviour. We must not support nuclear suicide, nor alliances and pacts contrived to facilitate universal death or to spread the pall of disease, sterility and deformity through nuclear weapons-testing.

More importantly, the positive side of this democratic revolution lies in the support of everything in the particular government's behaviour which moves in the direction of world co-operation, world order and a shared world security under the beginning of world law and the enforcement of world law. Unilateral actions must thus be enacted in defence to the total interests of humanity everywhere—unilateral disarmament, unilateral strengthening of reliance upon world authority, and unilateral co-operation with the sane and moral forces in all regions and nations. People must make their nations "go it alone", if necessary, for world order and for world peace.

### *Employment of non-violent force*

Whatever sets barriers against the world community must be boycotted non-violently, so that, lacking popular support it will die. Whatever contributes to the minimum essentials of world community, without which mankind will not survive, must be made to live as the dynamism for a new democratic



age. Resistance and co-operation are always the two essential sides of the use of non-violence.

Gandhi's experiment in India revealed the availability of the method of peaceful persuasion not only to all people but in all areas of human need. He bequeathed to the world amazing new possibilities for popular struggle against unjust or against encroaching regimentation and tyrannical forms.

In a struggle that implements democracy's method of peaceful persuasion, method and goal converge. In each life, in each nation, in the international arena, no longer need the end justify the means; it is now possible to employ the right means to achieve humanity's goals. Such was the gift of Gandhi. His great achievement is not merely a mile-stone in democratic progress; it is perhaps a thousand-year marker.

In July 1940, the author, then resident in India, wrote to Gandhi to propose that Gandhi help develop a world non-violent movement against the worldwide structure of organized violence which makes the sequence of wars following wars inevitable. The letter appealed to Gandhi to help develop non-violent war-to-the-finish against the whole structure of man's inhumanity to man; it suggested that non-violent defence forces be developed for the precise purpose for which military force is being developed, and that such a development in India, where obvious preparation would make it possible, might lead to the organization of a vast Peace Army for the whole world.

Gandhi commented : "I gladly publish this letter. ....I do not expect to lead any satyagraha army of the world. So far as I can see at present, every country will have to work out its own programme. Simultaneous action is possible."

In order to have world peace and world law, overt violence has to be ended. Overt violence will end only when the structure of world violence is no longer the dominant force

both within and without the United Nations—when the strong themselves help to end the plunder of the weak. The United Nations must be changed to embrace such law and make it inclusive of all peoples, and support for its enforcement in all the world must be achieved. Otherwise another, more effective organization will arise in its place when the people are ready to demand peace and world order.

There can be no people's world community or authority of any kind until the people themselves carry through their own world struggle with non-violence. The democratic point of view requires democratically constituted law to give to it reality; the cold war, whatever the pretexts employed, requires force as the basis of its reality. People will have to choose the way of non-violent revolution if they and democracy are to survive.

Pressing one's nation into the democratic path, which is being so readily abandoned on every hand, will consist in a democratic revolutionary struggle of the first magnitude. Forces which are not those of the people or of their nations, but rather the forces of economic organizations and correlative super-states, will resist bitterly and aggressively. As in all ages, the old dying order will strike at the dynamic, advancing new order. Prisons may not, for a time, be large or numerous enough to hold the true patriots of the struggle for democracy.

Among Americans today there are two movements working for world order and peaceful co-operation to be achieved through the necessary unilateral national surrender of specific measures of constituted authority. One of these is the world federalist movement; the other is the growing movement demanding unilateral disarmament. The latter, instead of implying no defence, argues rather for an adequate defence as the alternative to the present world threat of common suicide.

These are really but two sides of the one popular demand for world security, established through reason rather than through fear and passions, and resting upon popularly constituted democratic law. Both want a minimum democratic world framework within which co-existence and survival are possible for man. Unfortunately neither of the two has seen itself as related to the other. But if the unilateralists who resist national militarism do not see world order as the goal of their conscientious objection, they are quite unrealistic. And if the world federalists do not realize the necessity of the refusal to support national militarism as the primary condition for a world order that can "police" a world for co-existence, peace and justice, then they are not only unrealistic but also quite useless.

The only miracle remaining to modern man is the one of people standing up in dignity, the dignity which makes active love available. A democratic revolution is a new way of new relationships among all peoples: a new way for solidarity, security and peace for all men. A world revolution of non-violence can bring world order and, through such order, the co-existence and co-operation of the most disparate of social-economic orders or world views.\*

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\*This article has been condensed from the book *Democracy and Non-violence*; used with the permission of the publisher, Porter Sargent, Boston Massachusetts and the author.

# Humayun Kabir

*says that we can eliminate violence in international arena through the substitution of legal power and authority in place of anarchy of national interests.*

The search for human unity goes back to the earliest days of recorded history. Prophets and poets have always dreamt of a unified world. Military conquerors have from early ages attempted to impose unity through force. The quest for unity however remained an aspiration and could not be achieved because of inadequate technology. Empires no doubt flourished for long or short periods but they were neither universal nor truly integrated. They were more in the nature of loose federations in which local rulers reigned supreme with only nominal allegiance to the emperors. Even these local satraps held limited sway and could govern only as far as their military power stretched.

Prophets and religious teachers also attempted to unite mankind but rarely succeeded. The early religions were frankly regional. Even so developed a religion as Judaism thought and thinks of the Jews as a chosen race. Christianity was initially meant for the Jews alone. It was only when the Jews rejected it that its gates were thrown open to others. Buddhism and Islam from the very beginning decided to transcend national, racial and regional boundaries. Because of inadequate communications and undeveloped technology, these two world religions also soon divided into regional manifestations.

The failure to develop one world outlook was not however a threat to human survival in ancient or medieval times. Lack of transport and communications prevented unity but also prevented conflicts. Even major civilizations and peoples kept within their own territorial limits and their contacts were at best peripheral. Agriculture, commerce, industry, politics and even religion remained regional and self-contained till the great scientific discoveries of the seventeenth century shattered the old order and ushered a new and modern age.

With advancing technology, the world began to shrink. The first impact was felt in the sphere of industry and commerce. As the scale of production increased, the demand for larger markets grew. Empires came into existence to guarantee sources of raw material and markets for finished goods. The static civilization of Asia, Africa and America were disturbed and disrupted by the violent eruption of Europe. For some two hundred years, Europe sought to unite the world economically, politically and culturally by imposing its sway on all. Trade followed the flag and missionaries sought to consolidate the economic and political conquest by cultural and religious domination. It was only their internal rivalries that prevented the unification of the world through the establishment of a European hegemony.

The rivalries of European powers led to spheres of influence. This offered other regions the chance of asserting or recovering their autonomy. U.S.A. was the first to challenge the European domination in the economic and the political spheres. In the fields of religion and culture USA was a projection of Europe and was able to meet the European challenge mainly because of this fact. The Monroe Doctrine was an assertion of the unity of the American Continent and helped to keep European domination in check but only by adopting European attitudes, methods and technology. Vast areas of Asia and Africa suffered the humiliations of political subjugation and the greater evil of economic exploitation, and cultural emasculation.

The urge for human unity could not be met by parcelling the world among rival European powers. The logic of events compelled them to fight one another for supremacy. The process of struggle led to the elimination of one empire after another and today all empires have vanished. Their place has been taken by two Super Powers, the USA and the USSR, who both claim to be non-imperialist, even though some of their actions are hardly distinguishable from those of the imperialist powers they have displaced. Nevertheless a great change has come in the recognition by these two Super Powers that physical conquest of other countries and political domination over them are no longer possible in the modern world.

Technology has unified the world today by overcoming the barriers created by time and space. In ancient times an idea could travel only as fast as man could move. Till the middle of the last century, this could not be more than 200 miles a day. Today an idea can be flashed simultaneously throughout the world. In physical movement also, man has gone round the world in less than two hours. Even twenty years ago this was beyond the scope of his wildest imagination. Mount-

tains and oceans no longer divide man. He travels over both and launches into space at terrifying speeds. Technological unification of the world demands economic, political and cultural unity while safeguarding the diversity and autonomy of the constituent units.

Technology has today created conditions where war can and must be discarded. In ancient times, nations fought one another for raw materials and markets. They lived under a constant fear that without political control over territories they would face starvation and death. The development of science and technology has for the first time eliminated that fear and created conditions where everybody can be assured the necessities of life. This is today feasible provided the energies of man are directed to productive ends and the wealth so produced distributed equitably among all members of mankind.

Conflict or war for assuring survival is therefore no longer necessary. On the contrary, war today threatens the very existence of man. Weapons of destruction have been fashioned which can destroy not only the warring parties but the entire world. The USA and the USSR have enough atomic weapons to destroy themselves and everybody else. Today, any large-scale war may become global and lead to the annihilation of man. Science and technology have therefore created conditions where mankind must feel and act as one or perish.

Not only has war among nations become an anachronism in the modern world but also class conflicts within the same nation. Major powers have withdrawn from the brink time and again because of their realization that a full-scale global war will destroy mankind. There is a balance of terror which maintains an uneasy peace in the modern world. This is some gain but there is still lack of realization that violence within the community may pose an equal threat. One

reason is that no internal conflict today remains wholly internal. There are so many affiliations within nations and among nations that an internal conflict in one place may and does attract interference from outside. The Spanish civil war began as a conflict between two Spanish groups but soon developed into a rehearsal for the second World War because of intervention by major powers. Vietnam is a cruel reminder that great nations cannot refrain from interfering in the affairs of less powerful States. In Western Asia, the problems could be resolved if the Great Powers had not intervened. There can thus be no assurance for the future unless violence internal and international is eliminated.

The interlacing of relations at every level of life compels the modern citizen to think in terms of the whole world rather than of his own country or community. In the past, events within any one country had little or no repercussion outside. If a ruler made mistakes, his subjects suffered but there was no danger of world catastrophe. Today, any decision within any country affects the lives of millions of people everywhere in the world. Politics has therefore today become too serious a matter to be left to the politicians alone.

The elimination of violence can be achieved only through the substitution of legal power and authority in place of the anarchy of group interests. Civil society was established within the nation when the individual gave up his right of private vengeance. Even when a person is aggrieved and his grievance is genuine, he cannot take the law in his own hands but must submit to the arbitration of the State. This does not always ensure fair dealings and there have been cases of grave mis-carriage of justice. Mankind has however found that on the balance some cases of injustice are to be preferred to the alternative of anarchy which would result if every individual claimed to be complainant, judge and



executioner in his own case.

The right of the individual to seek redress has been curtailed but no similar curbs have been imposed on nations. Nation States have been instruments of progress in the past and helped to check the tyranny of feudalism and oligarchy. Today, the nation State has become a major cause of international conflicts that threaten the survival of man. Just as the individual has surrendered his right of private redress and accepted the jurisdiction of civil law, the time has come when the nation State must submit to a world authority and surrender its claim to redress grievances itself. There will be occasions of injustice in international as in intra-national questions. Even then the world will soon find that international arbitration will on the balance be a great advance on the anarchy of national rights which exists today.

Two conditions are however necessary before a world order can emerge. The first is a guarantee of full cultural autonomy and freedom to all constituent units. One of the most fascinating developments in the last fifty years has been the emergence of giant powers accompanied by an insistent demand for greater autonomy by smaller and smaller constituent units. The second condition is the creation of a body of enlightened public opinion throughout the world. Civil authority gained power as its impartiality was increasingly recognized. The world authority will also secure greater acceptance by assuring fairplay, justice and equitable consideration for all. Education in the modern world has a responsibility for creating in the younger generation a sense of dedication to the union of mankind and a sense of involvement where the welfare of one will be the welfare of all. There is no future for man with a World State but a World State can be established only when the claim of each unit to autonomy and growth is fully and freely accepted.

## The Editor

*sums up the whole discussion.*

In the preceding articles, learned contributors representing a wide spectrum of opinion have discussed the relationship between democracy and non-violence. They have thrown light on the various aspects of their relationship. All the contributors seem to agree that both the concepts are inter-related and interdependent; they are probably the two sides of the same coin. Both point to the same goal and both follow the same path. Both are inspired by the same vision of human life and destiny. Both nourish and strengthen each other in their onward journey towards human growth. The contributors have sought to study this relationship in the context of hard, often frightening, realities of the Indian situation.

It is not our purpose to recall and recapitulate here all the ideas discussed and debated, the issues raised and replied. Such an attempt is neither possible nor desirable. We shall however try to sum up the discussion with a view to clarify the basic and underlying ideas and give a thread to the whole discussion. For this purpose, we have divided it under three heads: theoretical discussion about the mutual relationship between democracy and non-violence; the various factors and conditions which breed violence and strife in our body-politic ; and a few suggestions to reduce and minimize the area of violence and coercion in our democratic set-up. This division, it is obvious, is not comprehensive and several aspects have remained uncovered under these broad categories.

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Democracy is a concept which is not amenable to a single precise definition. With each author, its meaning, contour and contents differ. One emphasizes one aspect, the other another. To borrow an old expression, democracy is like a hat which has lost its shape and form because everybody wants to wear it. The word democracy has become respectable and therefore fashionable. At least two participants to this symposium—Shri Mahadevan and Shri Balraj Puri—have expressed their concern about this unpalatable fact. They seem to be afraid of what they call the Indian contribution to the existing confusion by attributing an ‘Indianness’ to the concept.

To be sure, democracy has been defined in two ways, as a form of government and as a way of life. Both these concepts of democracy are supplementary to each other. Democracy as a form of government cannot be effective unless it pervades our entire individual and social life. At the same time, if democracy is to be practised as a way of life,

it must express itself into the political institutions of a country.

As a form of government, democracy refers to a type of political organization in which the government is run by the representatives of the people elected on the basis of adult franchise. The essence of democracy in this sense is not popular participation in the affairs of government, but 'the supremacy of popular will on the basic questions of social direction and policy'. There are various institutional mechanisms through which the supremacy of popular will is ensured; there are periodic elections, people have freedom to express their opinions and views, and they are free to utilize all media of communication to propagate them. There is the Rule of Law; all are subordinate to the law of the land as enacted by the representatives of the people and interpreted by an independent judiciary. As a way of life, democracy means to quote Dr. Diwakar "that our entire social life should be organized on willing co-operation, collective thinking and majority decision". It means cultivation of the spirit of mutual tolerance and understanding, a willingness to settle our differences through the established procedure of law and a developed sense of social responsibility and concern.

The concept of non-violence has not been subjected to a close scrutiny in this volume. Participants have taken for granted that people understand the precise meaning of non-violence. Gandhi has conceived non-violence not merely as an individual discipline for moral excellence or salvation, but as an all-pervading law of life. To him, non-violence was not a mechanical dogma or a metaphysical abstraction but an outlook and approach towards entire individual and social life based upon love, justice and human compassion. It signifies creative and constructive processes to effect change eschewing violence and hate. The essence of non-violence lies in its spirit of love, of sympathy and understanding to-

wards the opponent. Resisting evil through non-violence is the way of satyagraha. The theory of non-violence is founded on the faith in the ultimate goodness of human nature and the efficacy of peaceful and loveful approaches towards the solution of problems or reconstructing human society.

It is therefore obvious that democracy is a form of government which comes closest to the normative demand of non-violent conduct. A democratic form of government is the concrete expression of non-violence in the affairs of a State. Shri Ramachandran has explained the relationship between democracy and non-violence with reference to the evolution of different types of political systems and forms of government. In the earlier period, there was the rule of tribal-chief and the witch-doctor. The commands of the former and the wisdom of the latter were the arbiter of the group's destiny. Nobody dared to question them or disregard their authority. Then came the next stage of evolution, the rule of the kings who were supposed to derive their powers direct from God. But in a way their regimes were less autocratic, for the power used to be shared at different levels. Members of aristocracy and religious leaders had their say in the affairs of the administration. Kingdoms and monarchies gradually turned into plutocracies. This process of evolution led to the increased participation of the people in activities of the government. It led to the gradual establishment of the Rule of Law in the ever-widening spheres of life. Then has come the present system of democracy—parliamentarian or presidential—based upon the freedom of individual and the Rule of Law. This process of growth, Shri Ramachandran has suggested, is from violence to non-violence in the conduct of the political affairs of a country. To quote him, "The distance travelled by history to reach democracy from the rule of priests is the distance travelled by non-violence from vio-

lence in government and society." In other words, democracy is the applied religion of non-violence.

Democracy does not claim to eliminate all conflicts of interests and differences of opinions. This is neither possible nor desirable unless a different type of homo sapiens evolves on this planet. No way of organized life has yet been developed which can ensure total identity of interests and unanimity of approach. The main merit of democracy lies in the fact that it enables us to resolve our conflicts and solve our disputes through peaceful and constitutional manner. The differences are resolved through mutual understanding, friendly discussions and majority decision. The issues are decided through ballots and not by bullets. The counting of heads may not be a perfect way of deciding an issue, as wisdom need not be always on the side of the majority, yet it is a better way of deciding an issue than by recourse to brutal force.

A genuine democracy seeks to eradicate the area of violence and coercion in the affairs of administration by developing a system—however imperfect in practice—in which recourse to violence is both unnecessary and undesirable. There are certain well-defined features and characteristics of a democratic government which can be mentioned in this connection. Firstly, under democracy certain fundamental rights are provided to citizens, which are protected by an independent judiciary. Citizens have complete freedom to express their opinions unless they encroach upon the fundamental rights of the fellow citizens or endanger national security. People are free to utilize all media of mass communication to propagate their views and educate public opinion. They can also form organizations to promote their legitimate social, political and other objectives which are not in contravention of the law. "Continuous attempts to educate the public on

the issues involved, the mobilizing of public opinion, forming pressures and interest groups to influence governmental policies, and persuading members of parliament are all recognized methods of bringing out reform in laws." Secondly, in a parliamentary democracy, laws are enacted by the representatives of the people. Parliament alone can make the laws and it does so after careful consideration and accommodating different and conflicting points of view. Thirdly, the executive is responsible to parliament for its acts of omission or commission. There are various mechanisms through which the representatives of the people keep vigil upon the executive. They can even change a government in the wake of its failure. Fourthly, there is also an independent judiciary to protect the rights of an individual or a group. An individual or a group who feels that his or its legitimate rights are denied can go to the court. Independent judiciary is the hallmark of democracy. Lastly, there are periodic elections on the basis of adult franchise. Thus the people can change a government after a specific period if they are not satisfied with its policies and programmes. In India we witnessed nothing but a ballot-box revolution when the Congress Party lost power in nine States and its majority was drastically reduced at the Centre after the third general election. No other system of government, authoritarian or communistic, fascistic or allegedly socialistic, gives this right to its people. Masses have no option but to rebel and revolt against these regimes. Thus Prof. Madhok has concluded; "Democracy is the only form of government in which violence can be completely ruled out. People in democracy can get all that they want without resort to force or arms."

The above discussion however raises a crucial question, what is the place of satyagraha in the form of direct defiance of law in a democratic State ? Is an individual or group

justified in breaking a law enacted by the representatives of the people? There seems to be no unanimity of opinion on this subject. Shri Balraj Puri has suggested that direct action, violent or non-violent, is inconsistent with the spirit and requirements of democracy. Democracy means the Rule of Law, and if its citizens take recourse to satyagraha they undermine the very basis of democratic practice. They destroy the very assumption of natural harmony and accommodation based upon compromise by all groups and generate a belief that "certain deeply felt needs, decisions or interests are beyond compromise" and that extreme solutions are appropriate to satisfy them.

This view has been brilliantly refuted by Acharya Kripalani. He has argued that satyagraha against an unjust law is an inherent and inalienable right of an individual. Satyagraha should be distinguished from the ordinary violation of the law, for a satyagrahi breaks a law for fighting injustice and exploitation and gladly undergoes punishment. Unlike an ordinary law-breaker, he does not evade punishment but strives to change the heart of the opponent through conscious self-suffering. Acharya Kripalani goes to the extent of saying that satyagraha is neither unconstitutional nor illegal. It is only "constitutional action and though apparently violating the law, is really the fulfilment of the law." In this connection it is worthwhile to remember what Gandhi wrote : "Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every State puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes if it does not. But to put down civil disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience"

Dr. Bondurant has further clarified the issue by elucidating the essential difference between satyagraha as preached



and practised by Gandhi and what passes under its sacred name in this country or elsewhere. She has used two words, satyagraha and duragraha. Satyagraha means adherence to Truth; the emphasis is both on the purity of ends and means. But duragraha means insistence upon a wrong end or pursuing it by morally objectionable means or both. In satyagraha, the objective is not to coerce the opponent but to convert him. Satyagraha can be undertaken only for morally justified objectives. It should not be misused for attaining wrong purposes, as happened in the case of 'Kutch Satyagraha'. In this case, to quote Shri Santhanam, "while the technique of satyagraha was adopted in conformity with Gandhi's teachings, its objective was totally opposed to any moral principle."

There are several factors and conditions that make it imperative for us to accept satyagraha, as understood in Gandhian sense, as a necessary arsenal in the hands of an individual even in a democracy. Today a State has become a vast monolithic structure with tremendous power and resources. The scope of law is continuously expanding. Family life, education, housing, trade and commerce, practice of arts and crafts are all covered today by the laws enacted by the State. This has led to a detraction of individual liberty. Moreover, in practice the votes are manipulated by powerful groups possessing political power and economic resources. Dominant groups are able to exercise great influence upon the policies and programmes of the government. If the past experience is a guide, it can be safely said that mere existence of democratic structure is no guarantee that the interests of the minorities would be protected and respected. Finally, there remains the problem of bureaucratic inefficiency and lethargy which has militated against the fruits of democracy. Under these conditions, it is conceivable that there might

be occasions when an individual or a group is unable to seek redress of his or its genuine grievance through strictly constitutional means, and may be forced to resort to satyagraha.

Satyagraha should be resorted to only under exceptional circumstances. It should be used like a medicine and not as a full diet. Gandhi has administered us a caution when he said: "If every individual took the law into his hands, there was no State, it became anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or State. That was the destruction of liberty." Shri Santhanam has also observed that in "matters of large policy, satyagraha has no place in a democracy based upon adult franchise." All the guardians of democracy have to ensure that this noble technique of non-violence is not employed to strike at the very roots of a democratic structure.

If we review the activities of a modern government, we find two areas where a government is forced to employ violence and coercion. One is the problem of crime and the criminal. The other is of defence, self-protection from foreign aggression from outside. These are the two fields which are generally regarded as the exclusive domain of violence and brute force. Not a single participant has suggested that we can totally eradicate violence in these fields of governmental activity. Can non-violence offer any alternative?

Let us look at the problem of crime and the criminal. This question has been touched very briefly by Shri Ramachandran. According to him, non-violent approach in this field implies that a government should adopt creative and constructive processes to reform and rehabilitate the criminal. The objective of law enforcement authorities should not be punitive but corrective. They should try to wean the criminals away from the anti-social path. The government should realize that crime is a symptom of a malady in our body politic, economic structure and social upbringing.

The volume of crime is largely determined by our social, economic and cultural milieu. Therefore the government should also strive to remove those factors and conditions which are favourable to the growth of criminal tendencies. The non-violent approach in this field is in accord with the modern researches in the field of psychology, sociology and criminology, which have revolutionized our traditional notions about crime and criminals.

The other problem is more taxing and baffling to human mind. It is truism to say that democracies have not proved to be a panacea for world peace. Democracies have not desisted from imposing worst sort of imperialism in the past. Nor have they abstained from waging the cruelest of wars in human history. Their record in this respect has been disappointing. In our own times, as Dr. Jagannadham has observed, they are engaged in an armament race; unparalleled in human history. They are spending their tremendous resources—human and material—in devising, developing and stockpiling weapons of mass annihilation and murder. In fact, their investment in destructive power is rapidly increasing. The foreign policies of democracies are no more peace-orientated than those of non-democratic nations.

There is however a silver lining to the otherwise cloudy political horizon of the world. There are unmistakable signs that citizens in democracies are showing a great awareness of the problems of war and peace, armament and disarmament. They are deeply agitated. They do not want to remain silent spectators in the present circumstances. They are even prepared to challenge the wrong policies of their own governments. To illustrate this point we can take the example of the Vietnam war. It is indeed a great tribute to the vitality of American democracy that a section of the people has

raised a banner of non-violent revolt against military intervention in Vietnam. Thousands of young men have refused to participate in military activity and have willingly gone to prisons. Hundreds of thousands of law-abiding citizens have participated in meetings and marches to express their opposition to the present war. Such large-scale dissent is possible only in democracies. This can never happen in a totalitarian regime. Thus in a democratic system there are seeds for the growth of non-violence in this arena.

The question whether a democracy can defend itself against foreign aggression appears to be an academic exercise to most of us. The participants to this symposium have however not engaged themselves in this debate. The idea of a non-violent defence policy cannot be totally dismissed as entirely fanciful or unrealistic. There is growing evidence—empirical and experimental—which shows that the day is not far when it would be worth while to experiment with the idea. An organized Shanti Sena with a mass base can offer unbending resistance to the invading armies. Citizens in an occupied area can organize successful non-co-operation with the foreign troops or foreign administration. A world conscience can be aroused which would serve as a prophylactic force against foreign aggression and invasion. All this however calls for intensive research and objective studies. That some such studies have come up in recent times gives us hope and faith in the possibility of the practice of non-violence in this arena.

All the participants seem to agree that a democracy cannot be totally non-violent. There are bound to remain some areas where violence and coercion will prevail. Human being is a fallible creature and we cannot legitimately hope that all will achieve perfection. That can never happen except in a non-existent utopia. Moreover, it is pointed out that while

it is possible for an individual to become totally non-violent, a State cannot practise non-violence in all its activities. As Gandhi once said: "The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned away from violence to which it owes its very existence." But each and every democracy has to strive for becoming more and more non-violent, for unless people imbibe the spirit of mutual tolerance, understanding and compassion and abjure the use of violence for any purpose, the contents of democracy would not be real and lasting.

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In this context a casual survey of the contemporary Indian scene is not a pleasant exercise. It reveals a disturbing, if not frightening picture. One finds increasing manifestations of violence in our body politic. There has been a gradual and steady increase in organized crime, unlawful processions and meetings, dharnas, bundhs, threats of self-immolation, attacks on public property and the like. This disease has also afflicted the student community, and the seats of learning are not free from violence and strife. The field of industrial relations has since long remained a happy hunting ground for all sorts of unscrupulous leaders and damagogues who have anything but the wider interests of the community in mind. Though the initial wave of violence which had swept over India a year ago is practically over, yet violence is rampant in our social and political life. It is eating at the vitals of our democratic structure and corroding its very fibre. Democratic values seem to atrophy under present conditions.

What is at the root of violence in our public life ? No satisfactory answer can be given to this question. The present climate of violence, like any other social phenomenon, is the

cumulative effect of various forces interacting upon one another. It cannot be explained in isolation or with reference to a single factor. Contributors to this volume have been conscious of this self-evident fact. Therefore they have desisted from making a sweeping generalization or advancing a single explanation. They have mentioned various factors and forces which in their opinion are breeding an atmosphere of violence in the country.

Shri Khadilkar has referred to the urges and aspirations of the people, which have remained unfulfilled in the post-independence era. In his opinion, the objective of the freedom movement was not merely the political liberation of the country from the yoke of a foreign imperial power but the establishment of a social order founded on justice, human dignity and equality. After the dawn of independence, people were looking forward to speedy solution of their social and economic problems. The political independence had generated in them fond hopes of a life of peace and plenty. But their dreams did not come true, their hopes did not materialize. The promised structural changes did not take place in our society, which could alleviate the poverty and suffering of the people. As a result, people are becoming dissatisfied and discontented, and their dissatisfaction and discontent often express themselves in irrational acts of mass violence and misconduct. To quote Shri Khadilkar, "Frustration and discontent grip masses of the people. It is no exaggeration to say that they smart under the lashes of a deep sense of betrayal. And the forces are not wanting in this country which seek to fully exploit the situation to their own political advantage."

Much of the discontent scething in this country is economic in nature. The fruits of planning have not accrued to the people at large. In spite of the impressive plans, there

appears to be no immediate solution to the problems of poverty and unemployment. The gulf between the rich and the poor is gradually widening ; the class distinction is becoming more and more marked in the society of today. Inflationary trends have dislocated our life. In fact, as Dr. Gyan Chand has put it, the hardships and sufferings of the people are beyond description. One needs not be a Marxist to realize the close relationship between economic deprivations and acts of violence in public life. If the sceptic requires a simple proof to substantiate it, he has only to look at the fact that during the periods of food scarcity and the near famine conditions a year back, we had the highest record of mass violence in India.

The political factors behind the present situation have been mentioned by Shri Gulzarilal Nanda. The present political set-up is conducive to violence. As he observes : "The party system in a democracy provides encouragement for group discontent taking extreme forms and ending up in scenes of violence. Political parties are usually unable to resist the temptation of deriving political advantage from such situations." Some political parties have openly encouraged direct action in open defiance of law to promote their narrow objectives. What is still worse, an impression has been created that political leaders are unresponsive to public feelings ; a large number of them are corrupt and unreliable, and all is not well with the political administration. This feeling, right or wrong, has destroyed the respect for political power and has bred a psychology which is conducive to violence and strife in the society.

The Indian society has been undergoing a process of radical change. Under the stress of industrialization and urbanization, the traditional set-up and structure is breaking down. People are imbibing new values of life, and the primary means of social control are no longer operative upon

them. How far the uprooting of individuals from traditional social and cultural milieu, loosening of the hold of primary means of social control like family, community and religious affiliations and atomic patterns of behaviour contribute towards the weakening or strengthening of the forces of democracy and non-violence is a subject of great importance to all of us. This subject has not received the attention it deserved in this volume.

The unplanned and haphazard growth of industrial towns and cities with their horrible working and living conditions has been an important contributory factor. Every industrial town suffers from acute housing shortage. People are forced to live in slums or dwell on pavements, railway platforms, and so on. They have practically no family or social life. The working conditions too are not satisfactory. Overcrowding, deprivation of sexual lives, lack of privacy, unbearable dullness of living, breed nothing but anti-social ideas. People have no incentive to become good law-abiding citizens in these inhuman conditions. Some of them gain and not lose from acts of mass violence and misconduct.

In my view, the problem of alienation is a major factor which breeds the forces of violence and strife in the present society. When a person feels uprooted, disorganized and alienated, it is understandable that all ethical norms of conduct lose their significance. Individualism aided by sensate value-system and uninhibited competition tends to strengthen the forces of selfishness instead of altruism, of indifference instead of compassion and of hatred instead of love. Modern sociological researches show that alienation is a potent cause of crime, delinquency and deviant behaviour in modern society. There is a need to study this phenomenon with reference to the occurrence of public violence in India. Researches in this field are bound to provide sufficient material to posit a theory



in this regard.

In India the government cannot escape from its own responsibility in encouraging violent and coercive agitations. It has created a general impression in the minds of the people at large that the demands of some individuals and groups could be accepted if they took recourse to violence and coercion. It generally bows to the demands of such groups out of political expediency. People have come to believe that violence pays in the public life. This has encouraged unscrupulous leaders and groups to preach the cult of mass violence. Prof. Balraj Madhok has rightly observed in this connection : 'the impression has gone round the country that violent and agitational methods succeed. This has put premium on violence and violent methods and even those who are intellectually convinced about the incompatibility of violence with democracy sometimes feel constrained to take to violent methods to get the just and reasonable demand accepted.' The wrong handling of a situation by the administration and police has also sometimes contributed to the eruptions of violence in this country.

Innumerable other factors can also be mentioned. Religious chauvanism has been a constant source of violence in this country where people of diverse religious faith are to be found. Communal disturbances are still not uncommon. The rigid caste-distinctions and loyalties also lead to frictions and conflicts erupting in violence. There is some evidence to believe that incidents of this kind have increased as a result of new consciousness among untouchables and other exploited groups and castes. The problem of student unrest is also there. All these factors taken together, in the opinions of the participants, explain the present climate of violence in this country.

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In the light of the above discussion, we can discuss a few suggestions to curb and reduce the areas of violence and coercion in a democratic set-up. The treatment of a disease is always related to its diagnosis. Therefore the contributors have put forward their suggestions in accordance with their analysis of the causes of violence. By their very nature, the suggestions are complementary and supplementary to one another.

Most of the contributors have emphasized that no government—however apparently democratic—can progress towards non-violence unless it provides social and economic justice to the masses. Non-violence to be effective must pervade our entire social and economic life. The roots of violence, as we have seen, are to be found in the social and cultural milieu of a society and it is there that we have to strike at them. To attempt to eradicate violence without necessary structural changes in social and economic life is like applying balms for headache without treating the cold which is responsible for it.

The role which Gandhian programme of socio-economic reconstruction could play in eradicating the roots of violence and evolving a just economic and social order has been hinted if not elucidated by Shri Achuthan and Dr. Gyan Chand. It has been suggested that the Gandhian theory of trusteeship can offer a solution to the present economic ills and disparities of wealth. Trusteeship enables us to transform a capitalist society into an egalitarian one. It is a way of the change of the heart ; capitalists are required to treat their belongings as a sacred trust which they have to use for the good of the whole community. Trusteeship, as conceived by Gandhi, does not merely apply to the economic possessions of an individual but also to his mental and physical capacities. Therefore, trusteeship implies radical change in our social

and economic relationship. It is a revolutionary concept whose potentialities are yet to be explored. The learned contributors have not mentioned how far the trusteeship idea is within the realm of practical politics in the existing sensate culture.

Dr. Giri has commended the Gandhian approach to labour problems as a way for ensuring industrial peace and economic growth. A healthy labour movement, he insists, should be equally concerned with its rights and duties, privileges and obligations. It should be conscious of its tremendous responsibilities towards the development of the whole country. Dr. Giri has emphasized that labour should only follow a peaceful and non-violent path to press its demands or voice its grievances. To quote him : "Peaceful and non-violent behaviour under provocation is the *sine qua non* for obtaining justice through any mass struggle of this type. The workers, while on strike, should see that they do not damage the property or injure the person of anybody. They should not bear ill will towards their employers or their officers, as the workers are fighting the evil in the employers and not the employers personally." There can be no doubt that if this advice is adhered to, much of the violence and strife in industry could be averted paving the way for more harmonious and stable labour-management relations.

Citizens, Dr. Appadorai has observed, should realize their own responsibility to protect the democracy from violent outbursts and disorder. A citizen is the core of the organized social life. It is ultimately he who suffers—directly or indirectly—from acts of public violence. He cannot afford to remain indifferent to what happens. He should mobilize effective public opinion. He should explain to the people at large that direct action is repugnant to the theory and practice of democracy. They should adopt only peaceful and consti-

tutional approaches towards the solution of their problems. Only under exceptional circumstances, they should take recourse to the weapon of satyagraha in its Gandhian sense. But they should see to it that it remains a genuine stuff and does not degenerate into duragraha.

The responsibility of political parties is quite obvious. They will have to exercise greater degree of social restraint and responsibility—and if I may add—democratic approach, than most of them exhibit today. In the interest of democracy, they should refrain from organizing bundhs, gheraos and other such types of agitations which are likely to take a violent turn in the end. They will have to inculcate a proper sense of discipline among their partymen and sympathisers. Shri Balraj Madhok is right when he says: “Leaders of Opposition Parties should also be clear in their minds that they cannot go on harping on democratic rights while taking resort to undemocratic and violent methods to achieve those rights . . . . It is the duty and responsibility of the democratic parties and elements, whether in power or outside, to make a concerted effort to isolate and expose those parties and elements which want to make use of democratic liberties but have no faith in democracy as such. If they continue the present policy of submitting to the undemocratic pressures of such parties, they would be only prompting others to toe their lines and follow their methods.” The idea of a Code of Conduct for all the political parties deserves to be mentioned in this connection.

The general approach and the policies of government also needs to be changed and modified to face the problem of mounting violence and strife. A democratic government should strive to root out those factors and conditions which breed an atmosphere of violence in a society. It should also create conditions for the proper growth of the values of democracy

and non-violence. In this country, an immediate task before our government is to dispel the general impression in the minds of the people that the government ultimately bows down to violent postures of individuals and groups. They should be made to realize that violence does not pay in the long run. The government should adopt reasonable but firm attitude towards acts of mass violence and misconduct. Prof. Balraj Madhok has observed in this connection: "They (democratic rulers) must pay proper attention to the people's wishes when they are expressed through democratic methods of public meetings or resolutions or peaceful demonstrations. They should make up their minds quickly whether a demand is just and correct or not. If the demand is just they should not dilly-dally in accepting it. If they are convinced that the demand is unjustified and its acceptance will not serve the end of justice, they must firmly reject it after reasoning it out with those who put forth the demand. They must also take the general public into confidence in regard to the stand they have taken in order to isolate those who persist in unreasonable and wrong demands..They should be prepared to court even temporary unpopularity by resisting violence and violent pressure till the people begin to feel that violence will not pay and that their grievances and demands can be redressed through peaceful and democratic ways." The government should also devise and develop non-violent means and methods of facing mass violence.

A well organized Shanti Sena can play a crucial role in this connection. It can intervene in a crisis-situation in a non-violent manner. It can also help to mobilize effective public conscience against violence, try to resolve conflicts between individuals and groups in local community and organize people for offering non-violent resistance to exploitation and injustice. Shanti Sena has made a small but promising begin-

ning in our country. It is gradually gaining strength and vigour to meet the challenge of violence in our public life. It has done some good work in a few parts of India. The practical suggestion of Shri Ramachandran that Shanti Sena should be promoted and assisted by the government deserves serious consideration of our administrators and constructive workers.

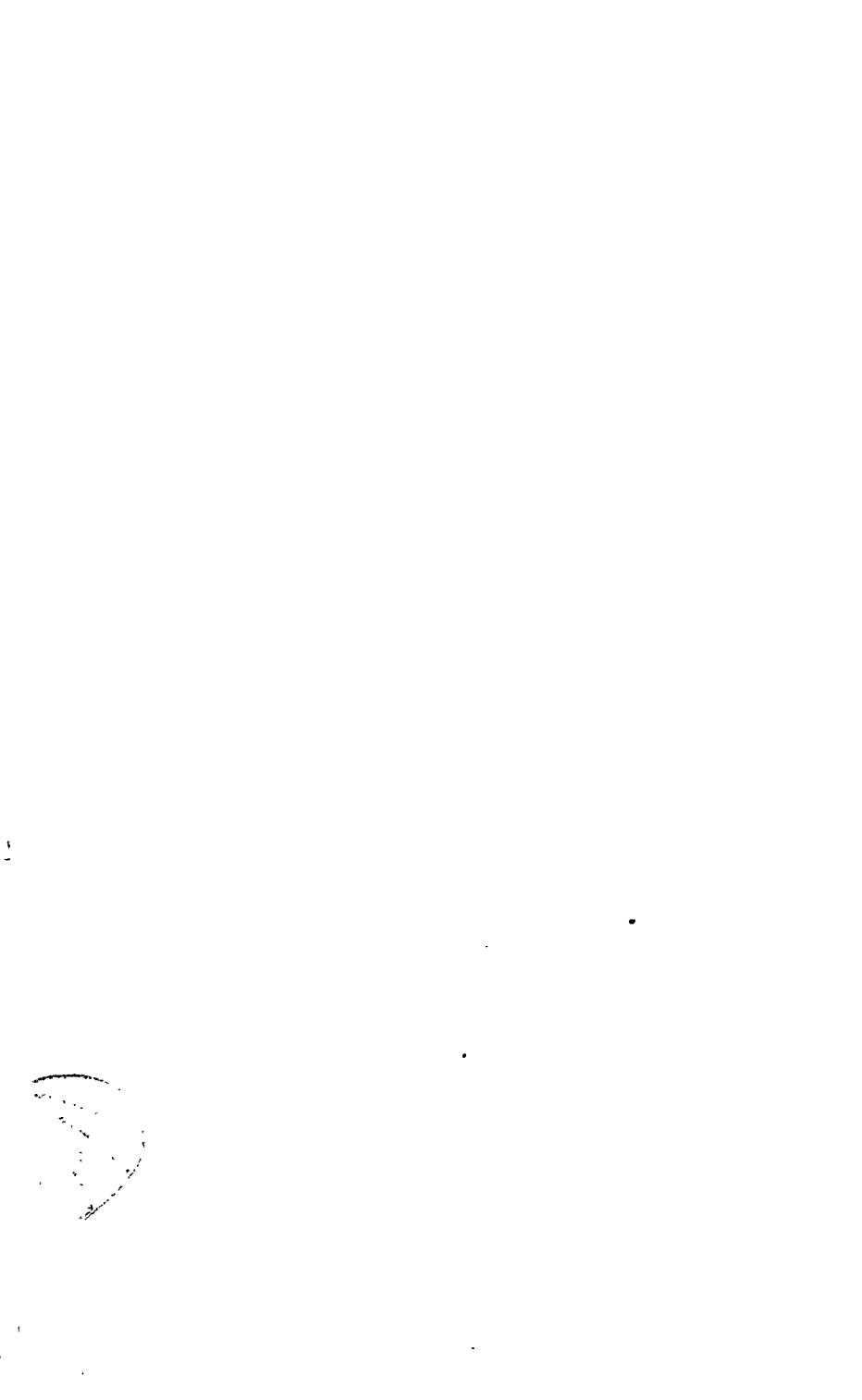
Some contributors have insisted that democracies should make sustained and concerted efforts to create a climate of peace and non-violence in the international arena. It is not sufficient to free our body politic from violence and strife, we should also work for the rule of non-violence among the community of nations. Several suggestions have been put forward in this connection. Dr. Saiyidain has pointed out: "So far as international relations and conflicts are concerned the democracies need to reshape their policies wisely and intelligently so as to minimize conflict and maximize peaceful approaches to problems. .They cannot and should not take refuge behind the plea that they cannot do anything by themselves, unless other nations—in fact, the whole world—do likewise." Prof. Kabir has also emphasized that democratic countries should work for 'the elimination of violence' through 'the substitution of legal power and authority in place of the anarchy of group interests.' The power of non-violence, in the opinion of Dr. Templin, should be harnessed for promoting world peace. Under the dynamic leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, India followed a foreign policy which could be described as the concrete expression of non-violence. In the interest of the aching humanity, we should not deviate from this policy of peace and friendship.

In the final analysis, what we need is a sound and effective programme of education in non-violence. A State can become non-violent, once Gandhi remarked, if a vast majority of its citizens adopt non-violence as a way of life. Mere change

in the institutional structure cannot usher in a non-violent democracy. We need to change the spirit, outlook and values of man through intelligent faith and constant self-discipline. That alone can evolve a democracy surcharged with the spirit of non-violence.

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